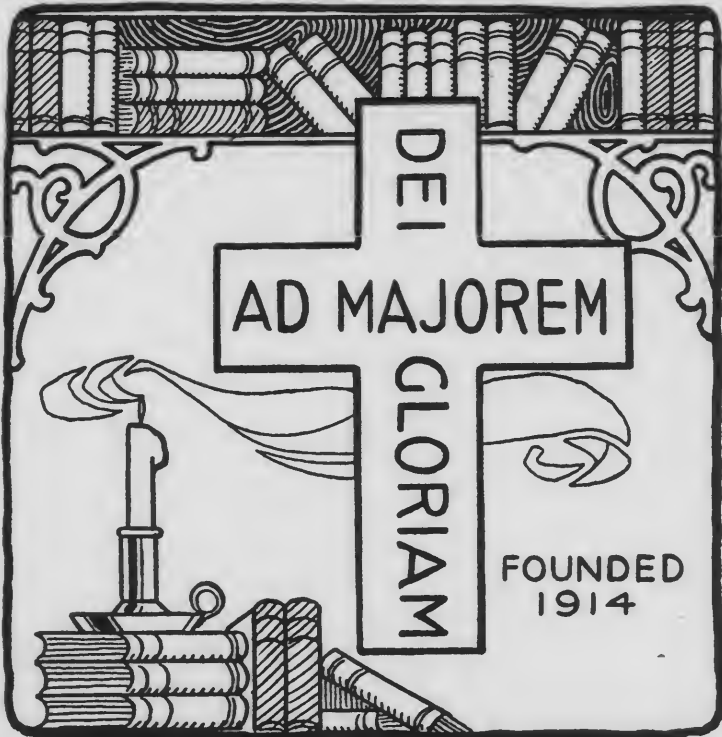


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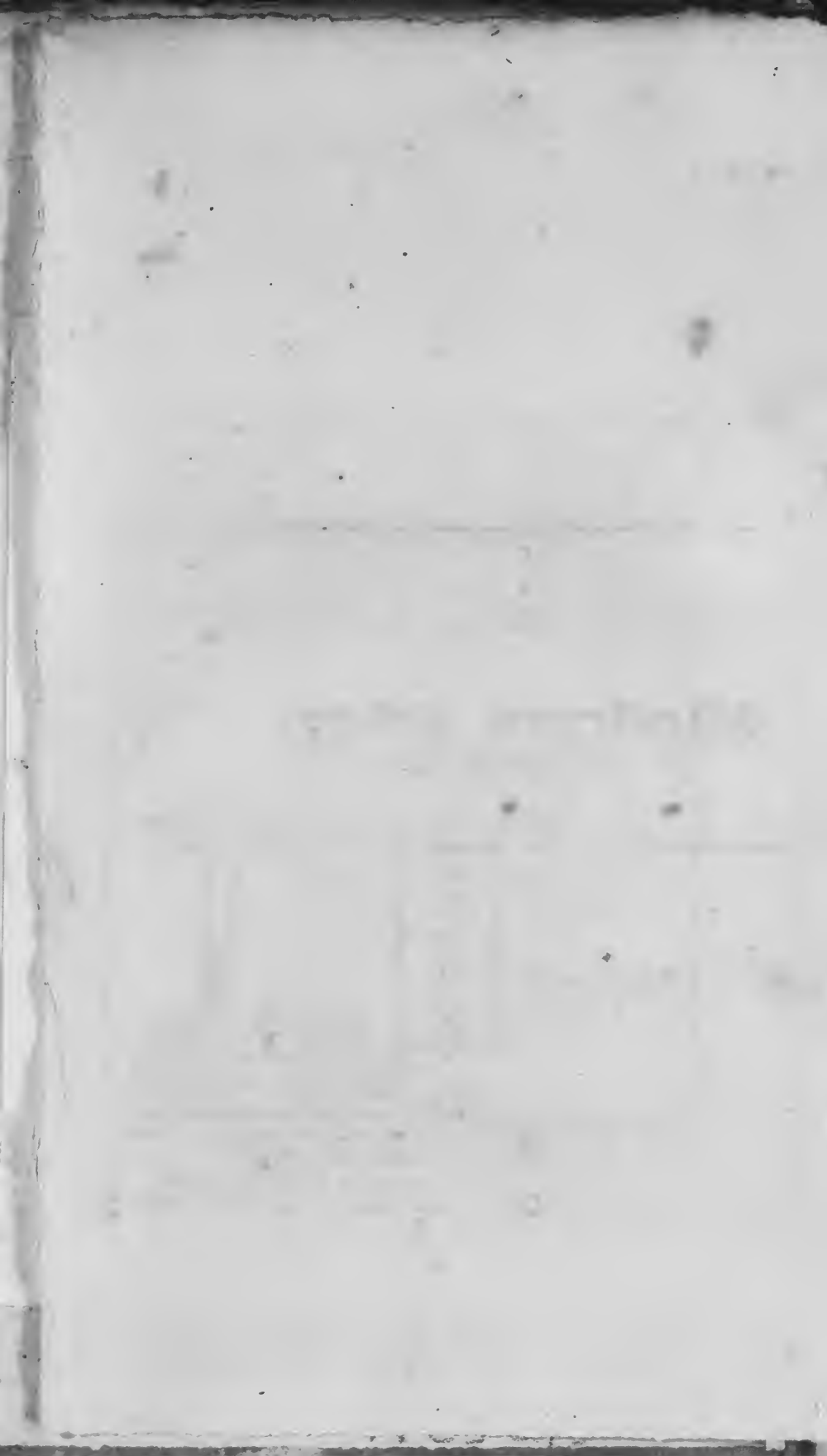


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THE
Wesleyan Polity

ILLUSTRATED AND DEFENDED

In a series of Propositions:

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO ASCERTAIN HOW FAR THE
RIGHTS OF MAN, AND THE SPREAD OF THE
GOSPEL, ARE AFFECTED BY ITS
PRESENT ORGANIZATION.

By **CHARLES WELCH.**

“Quocunque jeceris stabit.”

London:

Printed for Mason, 14, City Road, and 66, Paternoster-Row;
Turner and Co. Wm. Hart, Birmingham;
Burdett, York, &c. &c.

1829.

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ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

ERRATA:

Page 25, l. 2, for "average distance of country places,"
read "average number of Members."

— 25, l. 3, for "average number of Members," read
"average distance of places."

— 64, l. 2, for CONNEXION," read "Independency."

J. Hutchinson, Printer, Hull.

Wes. 2102.

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TO SUBSCRIBERS, &c.

I HAVE delayed the publication of this small manual, several months beyond the prescribed period, owing to a material change in my plan. I had proceeded a considerable way in my original design, when I found the work would have made two large octavo volumes; and as I had restricted myself to size and price, and had found an abridgement of the former manuscript impracticable, I was obliged to lay the whole aside, and recommence the subject on the plan now submitted to your inspection. In compiling this volume, I have thoroughly examined *every* line of the Conference-Minutes, ever published; and if the main arguments or propositions be not substantiated, it is my misfortune and not my fault. I am satisfied with the motives which induced the undertaking; I have thought with an old heathen, "it is a shame to have such scandalous reports circulated about us, and not be able to refute them*."

The Tables are not so perfect as I wish; but they are sufficiently accurate to prove the Propositions; I had not *all* the documents requisite to their completion.

In the *third* and *fourth* Propositions will be found several paragraphs resembling Watson's "Address to the London South Circuit;" the *entire* of my work was gone to the press before I saw that gentleman's pamphlet. A discerning reader will perceive, it is hoped, in this work, that concatenation of argument which nothing less than a minute investigation of the whole Minutes could elaborate.

* "Pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli."

OVID.

The change in my plan will also account for several typographical errata. Anxious to redeem my promise of immediate publication, I have not given the proof-sheets that close revision as to diction, &c. I would otherwise have given. My thoughts, however, have not been hastily formed; the economy of Methodism has been for years a topic which has engaged my closest thinking, and I feel amply repaid by an extended range of contemplation of the operations of Methodism; and see, at least I think I see, an apparatus unparalleled in the annals of the Church of Christ; in *doctrine*, discipline, consolidation, expansibility, and perpetuity.

There is one class of persons, some of whom may probably peruse this work, of whom I have but little hope of satisfying: viz. the *prejudiced*. You may as well attempt to create a world, as attempt to remove the scruples of a prejudiced man; and why? because he is prejudiced, for no other reason can be urged. To the conscientious doubter, seeking correct information, and who has patience to examine the whole procedures of Methodism, I trust this publication will be found of some utility. The nature of the subjects cannot greatly conduce to spiritual edification; yet such subjects are needful. The polity of a Church is like the scaffolding of a building; it is necessary to the erection of the structure; but when the top stone is brought on with shouting; when the Church of Christ, the Temple of the living God, is complete; when the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth *over* all, and *in* all; then shall the polity, or scaffolding, be removed; like every species of knowledge which partakes of the quality of means, it shall vanish away.

C. WELCH.

Charlotte-Street, Hull,
June, 1829.

INTRODUCTION.

THE history of Methodism will furnish a greater variety of incident, than any other portion of the general history of the Church of Christ, of equal range, duration and influence.—Among its opponents have been found, 1. Bishops, archdeacons, vicars, rectors, curates, parish-clerks, and sextons. 2. Peers of the realm, baronets, commoners, magistrates, justices, constables, and town-criers. 3. Merchants, colonists, planters, manufacturers, tradesmen, and mechanics. 4. Good men and bad men, wise men and dunces, the opulent and penniless, the hoary-headed sage, and beardless boys, just learning to prattle about the march of intellect.—The arguments have been as multifarious as the opponents.—1. *Argumenta ad intelligentiam*: tenets heterodox, feelings enthusiastic, laws arbitrary, and conduct unchristian.—2. *Argumenta ad passiones*: church in danger, government tottering, republicanism, insurrection, and rebellion; loss of credit, property, and character.—3. *Argumenta ad baculum*: vulgarly termed club-law; i. e. stones, sticks, guns, drums, fifes, kennel-sweepings, rotten eggs and gunpowder. These statements are not fictitious, but stand well authenticated in the annals of early Methodism, and are referred to, not with any vindictive or malignant recollections, but simply to shew that no sect in the last century has had to contend against such general obloquy. In reviewing the scenes of outrage and conflict, sometimes disgusting, often

appalling, and not unfrequently most ludicrous; it is natural to ask, "Who, among this host of foes, has understood the object attacked, or the means of its extinction? What injury has Methodism inflicted on the lives, peace, property, or character of mankind? Amidst this almost universal hostility, Methodism has never assumed the attitude of defiance, but the posture of defence; and reposing on the arm of Jehovah, conscious of rectitude of principle, purity of design, and philanthropy of soul, it has seen nothing in the menaces of enemies to unnerve its consecrated energies.—Of late years a *new* and extraordinary species of opposition has been created against Methodism; *the coalition of men who always hated it, with men who once loved it.* Without prejudging the motives, principles, and occurrences, by which so many seceders have been conducted through a rapid transition from love to hate, from veneration to disgust, from submission to resistance; and, who, by a desperate act of tergiversation, have thrown themselves under the banner of open and avowed enemies, and taught them how to direct their cannonade more destructively; there is one melancholy evil inevitably resulting from every such unseemly coalition, which seceders ought seriously to ponder before they transfer their energy and talents to the promotion of interests which, in the simplicity and fervour of youthful piety, they would have deeply abhorred. This evil consists in the reckless confusion of all christian ordinances, institutions, and sanctities, to the minds of men *deistically* inclined. The irreligious libertine, with almost resistless effrontery, quotes the recriminations and asperities exchanged between the *ins* and *outs* of a disturbed sect, in vindication of his total apathy to divine things; and whether the contending parties satisfactorily terminate their feuds, or repose in malignant silence, and everlasting separation, the impress of contempt on the mind of the scorner remains

unobliterated and imperishable.—These statements refer to the coalition itself, not to the events inducing it.—Those events will be the subject of scrutiny in the following pages; and though the Author does not pretend to solve every difficulty connected with the Wesleyan controversies, he is solicitous to lay down such principles, as, if adhered to, may prevent farther ruptures so discreditable to our common christianity.

It is high time the prerogatives of all classes, from the President of the Connexion to the probationary private Member, were distinctly defined, well understood, and inviolably maintained; and this demand is rendered imperative by the aspect of recent events; by the hitherto crude and mutilated exhibitions of the Wesleyan Polity; by the palpable errors afloat concerning the proper constituent elements of a christian church; by the profound silence which the Conference collectively, and its Ministers individually, have maintained on some important parts of the system; and by the present disposition of the public mind, which must and will have reason, as well as Scripture, to regulate its conduct and decisions.—It is greatly questionable whether a Treatise on Methodism, no matter how true, eloquent, or elaborate, issuing from the pen of an Itinerant Preacher, will much serve the interests of the Connexion, allay the irritations of the dissatisfied, or carry conviction to the prejudiced; not only because the preacher is currently considered a *self-interested party*, but because he cannot pursue the effect of that growing preference to Wesleyan pulpit eloquence, through all its ramifications, without previously disposing of his modesty. For, this preference is the master-spirit of the difficulty, to which all other matters are circumstantial and subordinate. The Conference has, for nearly ninety years, been called to the ceaseless and ungracious drudgery of vindicating its

doctrines, discipline, and character; but hitherto the lay part of the connexion has merely "peeped through the loop holes of retreat, and not felt the crowd." As the association, support, and continuance of the Wesleyan Connexion are *purely VOLUNTARY*, it must follow whenever the honor of its *governors* is impeached, the character of the *governed* is also implicated.—Are our ministers *despotic*? then are the members *enslaved*: Are our preachers *knaves*? then are the people *fools*. It is impossible to dissociate the inferences from the interrogatories. Who, that reads the unproved wholesale assertions of our being under "priestly tyranny and jesuitical thralldom," can repress his indignation? Are not the thousands of Members of Society in Great Britain, under prodigious obligations to those *Auroræ Boreales* or *Northern Lights*?

The arguments, supposed to prove Methodistical tyranny, tell too much; because, by a resistless re-action, three hundred thousand persons are deprived at once of common sense. The Author thinks the crisis has arrived, when the people ought either to take the *onus* from the shoulders of Conference, and demonstrate that the Methodist government, in this land of liberty, is not an "unscriptural and unwarrantable outrage on human freedom;" or, by a general secession, to dissolve the fabric at once.—To every unprejudiced mind, the former can be fully substantiated; and none but a demon can wish the latter.—The leading design of this volume is to shew, 1. That the Wesleyan system, when tried by the test of scriptural authority, of practicability, and of its utility, will indeed accelerate the universal spread of true Christianity, more than any other section of the Christian Church, possessing only the same human resources.—2. If the ministerial character of the Conference should so degenerate as to hazard the attempt of enthroning itself on the liberties of the Society,

by exacting compulsory supplies; the *peculiar* structure of the system is such as to vitiate the attempt, and to work out its own deliverance.—3. If it be true that the Preachers, in their collective character, have apostatized from primitive simplicity, purity, and zeal; the class leaders, in their collective character, have been accessaries to the fact; and, for their proportion of guilt, must give an account at the last day.—4. That the people at large unquestionably possess the means of redress without innovating or deranging the present organization of the Societies. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands of members in the Connexion, whose employment and inclination have not led them to examine our astonishing system in all its parts and bearings; they have been content to eat the bread of life at the hands of our ministers. Such members require a little help: this volume is compiled with a view to their benefit.

Whoever has attentively marked the progress of Christianity, from its first promulgation to the present time, must have perceived that the capital aim of Satan has ever been to neutralise the saving power of a pure ministry. For many centuries his designs have been most awfully and extensively fulfilled in the perversion of the very means first adopted to uphold and diffuse the interests of true piety; the union of *political power with priestly influence*. The legitimate use of political power is to protect the lives and properties of mankind on *civil* grounds, not on *religious*. If a number of men chose to be associated for pious purposes, they demand protection from the state on *civil* not on *religious* considerations; for the same reason that a community looks to the government for protection against burglars or highwaymen. Beyond this, no human power ought to interfere in the awful preparations for eternity; and yet, through almost the whole texture of Church

History, may be seen the crimson thread of persecution interwoven by an officious political power. A deep solicitude to prevent the recurrence of such awful scenes, pervades all sects of this Protestant country ! and the slightest priestly encroachment is watched by wakeful jealousy and deep concern. Hence, the inflexible determination of the Wesleyan Conference to resist delegation in any shape; the occasional expulsion of members for holding "separate meetings;" and a sort of Conference interpretation of ambiguous and disputable points; are urged in proof of the Wesleyan system possessing elements of tyranny, which only wait a favourable occasion to be exercised with relentless and uncontrollable sway.— It is much to be regretted that neither Conference nor People have yet given reasons for these apparent restrictions of human rights. The reasons ought long since to have been given, or the restrictions taken off.

The following pages aim to demonstrate that these restrictions are compatible with civil liberty; and, viewed in connexion with all the other parts of the Wesleyan economy, are essential to the final triumphs of the Gospel. A concatenated series of propositions appears to be the most unexceptionable mode of arriving at a just estimate of the character of Wesleyan Methodism; and of satisfactorily adjusting the points now litigating in some places between Preachers and people. The Tables, which precede the arguments, are not presented as matters of curiosity, but as essential accompaniments, without whose aid many of the arguments would lose their force, if not their entire validity. Those readers, whose acquaintance with Wesleyan Methodism is minute, will know better than to say, *cui bono?* of what utility are the Tables; they will best understand their uses, and most appreciate the labour of their compilation. These Tables, with their Explanations,

are printed first, not only for the sake of a ready reference, but that the subsequent series of arguments may be preserved unbroken by any intermixture of tabular typography. To the Wesleyan-Methodist financier, these tables will present a more dense and lucid exhibition of the Wesleyan System that can be found in any work yet printed; and will render the construction of farther tables needless for many years to come.—The propositions are not placed, *ad captandum*, in a capricious order; but with the strictest regard to their natural and just consecutiveness: and though some of the former propositions may appear to THE LIBERALS, to concede too much to ministerial authority; yet those concessions are sufficiently counterbalanced by the latter propositions; so as to present, as far as the Author is able, an *impartial* adjustment of all the great and popular questions of Methodist legislation.

TABLE I.

BARTON CIRCUIT.	MEMBERS IN SOCIETY.	NO. OF LEADERS.	MILES DISTANT FROM CIRCUIT TOWN.	NO. OF TIMES IN A MONTH AN ITINERANT PREACHER PREACHES AT THAT PLACE.
Barton.....	111	10	..	10
Barrow.....	71	5	3	7
Ferriby.....	36	4	3	5
Winterton.....	41	4	9	6
Burton.....	26	2	12	2
Alkbro'.....	21	1	11	3
Whitton.....	14	2	9	2
Winteringham.....	18	2	7	3
Horkstow.....	18	2	5	2
Bonby.....	14	1	6	2
Goxhill.....	33	3	6	3
Wootton.....	14	1	6	2
Ulceby.....	33	3	7	3
East Halton.....	25	2	10	3
Killingholme.....	29	3	10	3
Kirmington.....	11	1	9	1
Immingham.....	14	2	9	2
Kealby.....	6	1	10	1
Habrough.....	15	1	10	2

TABLE I.

HOWDEN CIRCUIT.	MEMBERS IN SOCIETY.	No. OF LEADERS.	MILES DISTANT FROM CIRCUIT TOWN.	No. OF TIMES IN A MONTH AN ITINERANT PREACHER PREACHES AT THAT PLACE.
Howden.....	95	7	...	10
Spaldington.....	38	2	4	2
Eastrington.....	19	2	4	2
Portington.....	29	1	4	2
Asselby.....	19	1	2	2
Barmby.....	4	1	4	2
Linton.....	5	1	3	2
Hook.....	9	1	2	2
Armin.....	49	3	3	2
Sandholme.....	17	1	6	2
Newport.....	80	5	6	4
Yokefleet.....	8	1	6	2
N. Cave.....	54	3	10	4
Broomfleet.....	10	1	12	2
Holme.....	65	4	8	4
Foggathorpe.....	11	1	8	2
Bubwith.....	29	2	6	2
Staddlethorpe.....	12	1	9	2
Ellerton.....	19	2	9	2
N. Duffield.....	14	1	10	2
Broughton.....	24	1	6	2
Loxton.....	11	1	4	2

TABLE I.

EPWORTH CIRCUIT.	MEMBERS IN SOCIETY.	NO. OF LEADERS.	MILES DISTANT FROM CIRCUIT TOWN.	NO. OF TIMES IN A MONTH AN ITINERANT PREACHER PREACHES AT THAT PLACE.
Epworth.....	68	6	..	12
Ferry.....	86	8	4	9
Crowle	41	3	6	4
Beltoft.....	5	1	3	2
Derrythorpe.....	14	1	5	2
Keadby.....	20	1	7	2
Amcotts.....	18	1	10	2
Luddington	19	2	10	2
Belton	50	3	2	4
East Butterwick.....	11	2	5	2
Burringham.....	10	1	7	2
Gunhouse	14	1	8	2
West Butterwick.....	24	2	5	2
Gunthorpe.....	5	1	6	2
Haxey.....	28	2	3	4
Westwood.....	11	1	4	2
Wroote	25	2	4	2
Burnham.....	4	1	1	2
Ealand	12	1	6	..

TABLE I.

GAINSBOROUGH CIRCUIT.	MEMBERS IN SOCIETY.	No. OF LEADERS.	MILES DISTANT FROM CIRCUIT TOWN.	No. OF TIMES IN A MONTH AN ITINERANT PREACHER PREACHES AT THAT PLACE.
Gainsborough	280	17	..	14
Misterton.....	30	2	5	8
Walkeringham	31	2	4	8
Beckingham	41	3	3	8
West Stockwith.....	34	2	4	8
East Stockwith.....	15	1	4	10
Blyton.....	19	2	4	10
Loughton.....	14	2	6	6
Scotton	17	1	9	4
Northorp.....	8	1	9	4
Willoughton.....	11	1	9	6
Hemswell.....	20	2	8	6
Willingham.....	28	2	6	6
Marton	25	2	5	6
Sturton	12	1	9	6
Stone.....	16	1	8	6
Torksey.....	11	1	7	6
Upton.....	6	1	4	5
Bole	10	1	3	4
Moreton.....	30	1	2	6

TABLE I.

DRIFFIELD CIRCUIT.	MEMBERS IN SOCIETY.	NO. OF LEADERS..	MILES DISTANT FROM CIRCUIT TOWN.	NO. OF TIMES IN A MONTH AN ITINERANT PREACHER PREACHES AT THAT PLACE.
Driffield.....	100	5	..	10
Nafferton.....	106	7	3	8
Frodingham.....	50	3	6	4
Beeford.....	25	3	8	2
Foston.....	40	2	6	4
Dunnington.....	6	1	11	2
Wansford	11	1	3	1
Fimber	9	1	10	1
Wetwang.....	35	3	6	3
Tibthorp.....	12	1	5	2
North Dalton.....	42	2	7	2
Lockington.....	45	3	8	4
Cranswick.....	6	1	4	2
Gartoe.....	28	2	3	4
Towthorp .....	..	..	9	1
South Dalton.....	25	1	11	2
Middleton	29	1	8	2
Bainton.....	15	1	6	2

TABLE I.

BRIGG CIRCUIT.	MEMBERS IN SOCIETY.	NO. OF LEADERS.	MILES DISTANT FROM CIRCUIT TOWN.	NO. OF TIMES IN A MONTH AN ITINERANT PREACHER PREACHES AT THAT PLACE.
Brigg.....	92	5	..	12
Hibaldstow.....	37	3	4	4
Kirton.....	37	4	7	4
Scotter.....	13	1	9	8
Wrawby.....	19	2	1	4
Messingham	36	3	7	4
Ashby.....	10	1	7	2
Bishop Norton.....	8	1	11	2
Waddingham.....	16	1	6	2
Scunthorp.....	22	1	7	2
Bromby.....	7	1	8	..
Frodingham.....	5	1	8	..
Broughton.....	13	1	3	2
Scawby.....	6	1	2	2
Seareby.....	15	1	3	2
Barnetby	18	1	4	2
Worldby	12	1	6	2
Elsham	11	1	5	1
Susworth.....	8	1	10	1

TABLE I.

SNAITH CIRCUIT.	MEMBERS IN SOCIETY.	No. OF LEADERS.	MILES DISTANT FROM CIRCUIT TOWN.	No. OF TIMES IN A MONTH AN ITINERANT PREACHER PREACHES AT THAT PLACE.
Snaith.....	87	6	..	6
Rawcliffe.....	53	2	3	5
Swinefleet.....	51	3	12	5
Reedness.....	20	1	14	3
Goole.....	23	1	9	3
Ousefleet.....	2	1	16	2
Adlingfleet.....	8	1	18	1
Garthorp.....	13	1	20	1
Baln.....	9	1	5	1
Pollington.....	20	1	3	1
Drax.....	13	1	5	1
Camblesforth.....	10	1	3	1
Temple.....	16	1	4	1
Haddlesey.....	31	1	6	1
Hensall.....	11	1	4	1
Gowdall.....	10	1	2	1
Carlton.....	12	1	1	1
Whitley.....	13	1	5	1
Egbro'.....	16	1	5	1
Rawcliffe Bridge.....	9	1	4	1
East Cowick.....	21	1	2	1

TABLE I.

BEVERLEY CIRCUIT.	MEMBERS IN SOCIETY.	NO. OF LEADERS.	MILES DISTANT FROM CIRCUIT TOWN.	NO. OF TIMES IN A MONTH AN ITINERANT PREACHER PREACHES AT THAT PLACE.
Beverley.....	202	11	..	20
Cottingham.....	90	4	5	11
Welton	39	3	10	5
Ellerker	14	1	11	1
Newbald	40	2	8	3
South Cave.....	32	3	10	2
Tickton.....	4	1	3	1
Little Weighton.....	7	1	5	2
Walkington.....	30	2	3	3
Riplingham.....	10	1	6	..
Skidby.....	10	1	4	2
Cherry Burton.....	7	1	3	2
Etton	5	1	5	1
Woodmansey.....	10	1	2	2
Weel.....	3	1	2	1

TABLE I.

PATRINGTON CIRCUIT.	MEMBERS IN SOCIETY.	NO. OF LEADERS.	MILES DISTANT FROM CIRCUIT TOWN.	NO. OF TIMES IN A MONTH AN ITINERANT PREACHER PREACHES AT THAT PLACE.
Patrington	48	4	..	8
Sunk Island.....	8	1	5	2
Keyingham	22	2	5	4
Ottringham.....	26	2	3	3
Owthorne	16	1	4	2
Rooss	38	2	6	4
Hedon.....	22	2	10	6
Preston	34	2	11	5
Burton Pidsea.....	22	3	9	3
Sproatley.....	12	1	14	3
Ryhill.....	7	1	6	3
Aldbrough.....	67	4	12	4
Hornsea	30	2	18	4
Brandsburton.....	30	2	22	2
Seaton	24	2	20	4
Atwick.....	34	3	20	3
Withernwick	21	1	17	3
Burstwick	5	1	7	1
Flinton.....	17	1	14	1
Mappleton.....	7	1	16	1
Catwick.....	11	1	25	2
Garton.....	12	1	9	2
Leven.....	10	1	25	2
Ellerby	12	1	7	1
Skirlaugh	26	2	21	2
Paull.....	28	2	10	2
Hollym	15	1	2	2
Holmpton	2	1	3	2
Frodingham	9	1	3	1
Welwick	11	1	2	2
Elsternwick.....	5	1	10	1
Thornumbald.....	10	1	8	2
Swine.....	21	1	16	1

SUMMARY.

	BARTON	HOWDEN	EPWORTH	GAINSBRO'	DRIFFIELD	BRIGG	SNATH	BEVERLEY	PATRINGTON
No. of Preaching Places	19	22	19	20	18	19	21	15	33
Average distance of Country Places....	22	28	21	32	34	20	22	33	20
Average No. of Members in each Place	8	6	5	5	7	6	7	5	10
Total No. of Leaders	50	43	40	46	38	31	28	34	53
Average No. of Leaders in each Place..	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2

* * GRIMSBY is the only Circuit in the District whose Schedule the Author could not obtain. The omission of *one* Circuit in the *whole* District, will not diminish the advantage derived from the other nine Schedules.

BARTON—550 Members; 50 Leaders; average distance of Country Places from Barton, 8 miles; average number of Leaders in each place, 2; average number in each Class, 11.

HOWDEN—621 Members; 43 Leaders; average distance of Country Places from Howden, 6 miles; average number of Leaders in each place, 2; average number in each Class, 14.

EPWORTH—465 Members; 40 Leaders; average distance of Country Places from Epworth, 5 miles; average number of Leaders in each place, 2; average number in each Class, 12.

GAINSBRO'—658 Members; 46 Leaders; average distance of Country Places from Gainsbro', 6 miles; average number of Leaders in each place, 2; average number in each Class, 14.

DRIFFIELD—584 Members; 38 Leaders; average distance of Country Places from Driffield, 7 miles; average number of Leaders in each place, 2; average number of Members in each Class, 15.

BRIGG—385 Members; 31 Leaders; average distance of Country Places from Brigg, 6 miles; average number of Leaders in each place, 2; average number in each Class, 12.

SNAITH—448 Members; 28 Leaders; average distance of Country Places from Snaith, 7 miles; average number of Leaders in each place, 1; average number of Members in each Class, 16.

BEVERLEY—503 Members; 34 Leaders; average distance of Country Places from Beverley, $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles; average number of Leaders in each place, 2; average number in each Class, 15.

PATRINGTON—662 Members; 53 Leaders; average distance of Country Places from Patrington, $11\frac{1}{4}$ miles; average number of Leaders in each place, 1; average number in each Class, 12.

TABLE II.		1765	1766	1767	1768	1769	1770	1771	1772
Members	{ in Great Britain	*	19752	23110	23641	25083	26482	282 85	27691
of	{ in Ireland.....	*	*	2801	2700	3180	3124	2739	3792
Society	{ in British Missions	*	*	*	*	*	*	316	500
Circuits	in Great Britain.....	31	32	32	32	36	39	37	37
Do.	in Ireland.....	8	8	9	8	10	10	10	10
Do.	in British Missions.....	*	*	*	*	*	1	1	1
Effective	{ in Great Britain.....	77	79	84	83	90	96	98	101
Itinerant	{ in Ireland.....	15	17	18	16	19	19	24	24
Preachers	{ in British Missions.....	*	*	*	*	*	4	4	4
Preachers	desisted Itinerancy.....	*	2	5	2	6	5	*	2
Preachers	died.....	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Supernumeraries.	.....	*	*	2	2	2	2	2	3
Preachers	admitted on trial.....	12	6	9	12	12	18	8	11
Preachers	admitted into full Connexion.....	8	11	6	11	10	16	15	4
No. of Members	to one Preacher in Great Britain	*	250	275	284	278	275	288	275
Centesimal Ratio	{ in Great Britain.....	*	2.1	91.4	2.29	6.09	5.57	7.18	2.1D
of Increase of	{ in Ireland.....	*	*	*	3.6D	17.7	1.1D	14.0D	34.7
Members.	{ in British Missions.....	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	58.1

TABLE II.		1773	1774	1775	1776	1777	1778	1779	1780
Members	{ in Great Britain	28826	30597	30756	32125	32963	32555	36567	37821
of	{ in Ireland.....	4013	4341	4237	4798	5311	5336	5940	6009
Society	{ in British Missions.....	1000	2204	3148	3148	*	6968	*	*
Circuits	in Great Britain.....	37	39	40	44	46	46	48	50
Do.	in Ireland.....	10	10	10	11	12	14	14	14
Do.	in British Missions.....	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*
Effective	{ in Great Britain.....	103	110	114	128	125	132	133	135
Itinerant	{ in Ireland.....	23	25	24	27	28	30	32	34
Preachers	{ in British Missions.....	8	7	11	*	*	*	*	*
Preachers desisted	Itinerancy.....	4	4	2	5	4	5	4	5
Preachers died.....		*	*	*	*	4	2	2	2
Supernumeraries.....		2	*	2	*	*	2	*	2
Treachers admitted on trial.....		12	15	9	13	10	12	13	11
Preachers admitted into full Connexion.....		10	5	20	7	4	12	7	4
No. of Members to one Preacher in Great Britain		279	278	269	250	263	246	274	280
Centesimal Ratio	{ in Great Britain.....	4.09	6.17	0.54	7.67	2.61	1.2D	12.3	3.42
of Increase of	{ in Ireland.....	5.82	8.17	2.4D	13.2	10.6	0.47	1.11	1.16
Members.	{ in British Missions.....	100.	120.	47.3	0	*	60.	*	*

TABLE II.		1781	1782	1783	1784	1785	1786	1787	1788
Members	in Great Britain	38242	39719	39902	42738	44614	47805	50674	53162
of	in Ireland.....	6175	6612	6053	6429	7817	10345	11413	12213
Society	in British Missions.....	*	*	*	14988	*	21459	28299	31468
Circuits	in Great Britain.....	49	51	54	56	61	66	72	73
Do.	in Ireland.....	14	15	15	16	15	19	22	26
Do.	in British Missions.....	*	*	*	2	3	3	6	6
Effective	in Great Britain.....	138	147	152	153	160	177	188	192
Itinerant	in Ireland.....	36	34	35	36	39	45	51	58
Preachers	in British Missions.....	*	*	*	3	5	9	10	11
Preachers desisted	Itinerancy.....	2	6	3	5	8	7	0	5
Preachers died.....		2	2	6	2	1	2	5	7
Supernumeraries.....		4	2	5	6	7	7	11	16
Preachers admitted on trial.....		9	15	11	8	20	39	32	30
Preachers admitted into full Connexion.....		14	13	9	25	4	6	5	5
No. of Members to one Preacher in Great Britain		276	270	262	279	278	270	269	276
Centesimal Ratio	in Great Britain	1.11	3.86	0.46	7.1	4.38	7.15	6.0	4.71
of Increase of	in Ireland.....	2.76	7.07	9.20	6.21	21.5	32.3	10.1	7.62
Members	in British Missions	*	*	*	*	*	*	31.8	11.1

TABLE II.		1789	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796
Members	{ in Great Britain	56199	58462	59318	61583	60964	69291	75081	77762
of	{ in Ireland.....	14306	13106	13158	13759	13969	14077	15266	16762
Society	{ in British Missions	*	48615	64146	71725	74345	75710	74564	70167
Circuits	in Great Britain.....	71	79	87	92	102	105	108	110
Do.	in Ireland.....	28	29	28	29	30	32	30	34
Do.	in British Missions.....	12	11	16	15	14	21	18	21
Effective	{ in Great Britain.....	202	217	223	239	249	270	273	278
Itinerant	{ in Ireland.....	44	64	66	69	67	69	72	78
Preachers	{ in British Missions.....	12	19	20	21	21	28	26	28
Preachers desisted	Itinerancy.....	4	2	5	1	4	0	2	4
Preachers died.....		4	1	2	3	7	6	10	3
Supernumeraries.....		11	14	16	20	22	22	23	7
Preachers admitted on trial.....		25	23	12	29	25	35	20	22
Preachers admitted into full Connexion.....		18	19	21	25	31	23	24	21
No. of Members to one Preacher in Great Britain		277	269	266	257	244	256	275	279
Centesimal Ratio	{ in Great Britain.....	5.71	4.02	1.46	3.81	1.0D	13.6	8.35	3.43
of increase of	{ in Ireland.....	17.1	9.1	0.38	4.56	1.52	0.77	8.43	9.79
Members	{ in British Missions.....	*	*	31.9	11.8	3.65	1.83	1.5D	6.2D

TABLE II.		1797	1798	1799	1800	1801	1802	1803	1804
Members	{ in Great Britain	82613	85055	91725	90619	89529	91948	96149	97218
of	{ in Ireland.....	17004	16657	16027	19292	24333	26706	24655	23006
Society	{ in British Missions	10542	11986	12830	13717	*	15939	15862	15796
Circuits	in Great Britain.....	113	116	122	126	130	133	143	152
Do.	in Ireland.....	32	33	34	35	37	38	38	40
Do.	in British Missions.....	8	14	15	17	18	18	18	21
Effective	{ in Great Britain.....	286	297	313	320	314	335	352	370
Itinerant	{ in Ireland.....	76	72	76	84	86	84	86	88
Preachers	{ in British Missions.....	22	29	32	37	30	36	34	38
Preachers desisted	Itinerancy.....	3	2	3	2	3	2	6	7
Preachers died.....		3	4	6	10	14	6	9	5
Supernumeraries		15	16	21	15	19	21	21	47
Preachers admitted on trial.....		3	26	29	13	19	32	28	39
Preachers admitted into full Connexion.....		25	29	16	26	16	19	29	22
No. of Memberstoone Preacherin Great Britain		288	286	293	283	285	271	273	262
Centesimal Ratio	{ in Great Britain.....	6.23	2.95	7.95	1.2D	1.2D	2.70	4.56	1.11
of Increase of	{ in Ireland.....	1.42	2.0D	3.9D	20.0	26.1	9.75	8.1D	7.1D
Members	{ in British Missions.....	9.2	13.7	7.04	6.91	*	*	0.5D	0.4D

TABLE II.		1805	1806	1807	1808	1809	1810	1811	1812
Members	in Great Britain	101915	110803	118515	116595	132086	137997	145614	155124
of	in Ireland.....	23321	23773	24560	24550	25835	27801	28149	27823
Society	in British Missions.....	15348	14980	13190	14836	13669	13630	13382	14450
Circuits	in Great Britain.....	155	162	176	192	211	233	267	275
Do.	in Ireland.....	39	41	42	45	46	46	48	49
Do.	in British Missions	20	21	21	19	28	30	32	33
Effective	in Great Britain.....	392	411	448	496	520	555	602	643
Itinerant	in Ireland.....	88	88	90	94	97	102	101	100
Preachers	in British Missions.....	31	39	42	39	41	55	54	51
Preachers desisted	Itinerancy.....	1	5	3	2	2	6	2	7
Preachers died	.....	7	10	10	11	10	13	8	11
Supernumeraries	.....	38	49	44	48	43	43	57	56
Preachers admitted on trial	.....	28	45	52	73	37	47	61	67
Preachers admitted into full Connexion	.....	16	32	29	35	31	40	44	71
No. of Members to one Preacher in Great Britain	.....	259	269	264	235	254	248	241	241
Centesimal Ratio	in Great Britain.....	4.83	8.72	6.97	1.6D	1.32	4.47	5.52	6.53
of Increase of	in Ireland.....	1.36	1.93	3.31	0.04D	5.22	7.60	1.25	1.1D
Members	in British Missions.....	2.7D	2.4D	13.D	12.4	7.8D	0.2D	1.8D	7.8

TABLE II.		1813	1814	1815	1816	1817	1818	1819	1820
Members	{ in Great Britain	162203	173885	181706	191680	193670	195101	196605	191217
of	{ in Ireland.....	28770	29338	29357	28542	21031	19052	22580	23800
Society	{ in British Missions.....	17025	18747	19885	21097	23052	23473	25050	27442
Circuits	in Great Britain.....	287	292	306	309	312	315	318	318
Do.	in Ireland.....	49	49	48	47	47	41	43	44
Do.	in British Missions	30	39	52	65	85	94	108	112
Effective	{ in Great Britain.....	662	685	736	727	671	655	647	640
Itinerant	{ in Ireland.....	104	114	132	133	104	101	80	82
Preachers	{ in British Missions.....	58	56	74	97	101	95	131	144
Preachers desisted	Itinerancy.....	4	9	12	7	8	7	2	2
Preachers died.....		12	7	5	10	12	29	11	20
Supernumeraries.....		56	46	67	68	78	77	90	87
Preachers admitted on trial.....		36	34	56	24	15	7	6	12
Preachers admitted into full Connexion.....		48	55	55	51	43	38	45	28
No. of Members to one Preacher in Great Britain		244	253	246	263	288	297	303	299
Centesimal Ratio	{ in Great Britain.....	4.43	7.34	4.49	5.43	1.03	0.73	0.77	2.8D
of Increase of	{ in Ireland.....	3.40	2.11	0.1D	2.8D	3.57D	10.3D	13.2	5.4
Members	{ in British Missions.....	17.7	10.1	6.07	6.09	9.26	1.3	6.2	8.7

TABLE II.

	1821	1822	1823	1824	1825	1826	1827	1828
Members { in Great Britain	200354	211392	219318	226939	228646	231045	237239	245194
of { in Ireland.....	23538	22718	22039	22047	22077	22514	22599	22760
Society { in British Missions.....	28678	29758	31411	32450	32334	32960	34892	36917
Circuits in Great Britain.....	319	321	322	333	338	340	346	351
Do. in Ireland.....	44	43	43	40	42	43	42	43
Do. in British Missions.....	112	118	124	126	131	137	138	138
Effective { in Great Britain.....	640	653	672	707	731	733	742	741
Itinerant { in Ireland.....	83	80	82	80	82	83	86	87
Preachers { in British Missions.....	150	152	158	168	152	170	186	190
Preachers desisted Itinerancy.....	3	3	3	5	3	4	5	8
Preachers died.....	13	17	13	16	12	23	14	16
Supernumeraries.....	100	108	109	107	118	118	116	128
Preachers admitted on trial.....	25	23	36	45	48	35	23	25
Preachers admitted into full Connexion.....	17	21	20	*	29	40	45	57
No. of Members to one Preacher in Great Britain	313	323	326	320	312	315	319	330
Centesimal Ratio { in Great Britain	4.25	5.5	3.74	3.47	0.75	1.04	2.67	3.35
of Increase of { in Ireland.....	1.1D	3.6D	3.0D	0.03	0.13	1.97	0.37	0.71
Members { in British Missions	4.12	3.76	5.55	3.3	0.3D	1.93	5.82	5.8

TABLE III.

	1765	1766	1767	1768	1769	1770	1771	1772
Total Annual Contribution of the Connexion to the								
{ Yearly Collection	708	695	805	5542	2524	1959	1666	3076
{ July Do.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
{ Book-Room.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
{ Schools.....	100	119	121	173	188	218	230	228
{ Auxiliary Fund.....	..	..	55	42	49	47	63	84
Average Annual Contribution of each Member to the								
{ Yearly Collection .....	..	8 $\frac{1}{4}d$	8 $\frac{1}{4}d$	56 $\frac{1}{4}d$	24d	17 $\frac{3}{4}d$	14d	26 $\frac{1}{2}d$
{ July Do.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
{ Book-Room.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
{ Schools.....	..	1 $\frac{1}{4}d$	1d	1 $\frac{3}{4}d$	1 $\frac{3}{4}d$	1 $\frac{3}{4}d$	1 $\frac{3}{4}d$	1 $\frac{3}{4}d$
{ Auxiliary Fund.....	..	..	$\frac{1}{2}d$	$\frac{1}{4}d$	$\frac{1}{4}d$	$\frac{1}{4}d$	$\frac{1}{2}d$	$\frac{1}{2}d$
Preachers' Wives. { Total No. to be provided for..	..	..	..	..	32	43	44	44
{ No. provided by Societies....	..	..	..	..	32	43	..	44
{ Do. Do. Auxiliary Fund...	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
{ Do. Do. Contingent Fund..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

TABLE III.		1773	1774	1775	1776	1777	1778	1779	1780
Total Annual Contribution of the Connexion to the	Yearly Collection	2238	570	556	633	0	622	473	629
	July Do. ....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Book-Room .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Schools	230	261	283	335	380	367	369	402
	Auxiliary Fund	82	65	119	82	85	99	106	87
Average Annual Contribution of each Member to the	Yearly Collection	19 $\frac{1}{4}d$	4 $\frac{3}{4}d$	4 $\frac{1}{4}d$	4 $\frac{1}{2}d$	..	4 $\frac{1}{2}d$	3 $\frac{3}{4}d$	3 $\frac{3}{4}d$
	July Do. ....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Book-Room .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Schools	1 $\frac{3}{4}d$	2d	2d	2 $\frac{1}{2}d$	2 $\frac{3}{4}d$	2 $\frac{1}{2}d$	2 $\frac{1}{2}d$	2 $\frac{1}{4}d$
	Auxiliary Fund	$\frac{1}{2}d$	$\frac{1}{2}d$	$\frac{3}{4}d$	$\frac{1}{2}d$	$\frac{1}{2}d$	$\frac{1}{2}d$	$\frac{1}{2}d$	$\frac{1}{2}d$
Preachers' Wives.	Total No. to be provided for..	44	43	46	46	53	44	43	52
	No. provided by Societies....	..	43	43	41	..	41	43	52
	Do. Do. Auxiliary Fund....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Do. Do. Contingent Fund...	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

TABLE III.

TABLE III.		1781	1782	1783	1784	1785	1786	1787	1788
Total Annual Contribution of the Connexion to the	Yearly Collection .....	..	662	717	803	900	918	1036	1203
	July Do.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Book-Room .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Schools.....	440	457	464	508	650	685	739	782
	Auxiliary Fund.....	208	252	245	370	472	365	459	421
Average Annual Contribution of each Member to the	Yearly Collection.....	..	3½ <i>d</i>	4¼ <i>d</i>	4½ <i>d</i>	4¾ <i>d</i>	4½ <i>d</i>	4¾ <i>d</i>	5¼ <i>d</i>
	July Do.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Book-Room .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Schools.....	2¾ <i>d</i>	2¾ <i>d</i>	2¾ <i>d</i>	2¾ <i>d</i>	3¼ <i>d</i>	3¼ <i>d</i>	3¾ <i>d</i>	3½ <i>d</i>
	Auxiliary Fund.....	1¼ <i>d</i>	1½ <i>d</i>	1¼ <i>d</i>	2 <i>d</i>	..	1¾ <i>d</i>	2 <i>d</i>	1¾ <i>d</i>
Preachers' Wives.	Total No. to be provided for..	48	64	66	70	69	75	79	91
	No. provided by Societies....	45	53	52	53	52	57	63	78
	Do. Do. Auxiliary Fund....	3	11	14	15	9	9	8	13
	Do. Do. Contingent Fund...	..	..	..	..	8	9	8	..

TABLE III.		1789	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796
Total Annual Contribution of the Connexion to the	{ Yearly Collection July Do..... Book-Room..... Schools..... Auxiliary Fund.....	1126 822 455	1226 907 695	1338 1036 731	1444 1229 715	1366 1178 1083	1388 1285 1176	1452 1351 1289	1474 1317 1250
Average Annual Contribution of each Member to the	{ Yearly Collection July Do..... Book-Room..... Schools..... Auxiliary Fund.....	$4\frac{3}{4}d$ $3\frac{1}{4}d$ $1\frac{1}{4}d$	$5d$ $3\frac{1}{4}d$ $2\frac{3}{4}d$	$5\frac{1}{4}d$ $4d$ $2\frac{3}{4}d$	$4\frac{3}{4}d$ $4\frac{3}{4}d$ $2\frac{3}{4}d$	$5\frac{1}{4}d$ $4\frac{1}{2}d$ $4\frac{1}{4}d$	$4\frac{3}{4}d$ $4\frac{1}{4}d$ $4d$	$4\frac{1}{2}d$ $4\frac{1}{4}d$ $4d$	$4\frac{1}{2}d$ $4d$ $3\frac{3}{4}d$
Preachers' Wives.	{ Total No. to be provided for.. No. provided by Societies.... Do. Do. Auxiliary Fund.... Do. Do. Contingent Fund...	98 78 15 5	98 82 12 4	109 83 .. 26	117 82 .. 35	121 82 .. 39	139 84 .. 55	150 90 .. 60	143 73 .. 70

TABLE III.

		1797	1798	1799	1800	1801	1802	1803	1804
Total Annual Contribution of the Connexion to the	Yearly Collection	1558	1751	2175	3337 _x	2301	4977 _x	3717	2670
	July Do. ....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Book-Room	1681	..	1139	1814	1657	1436	1679	1843
	Schools	1372	1463	1628	1580	1485	1744	1875	2068
	Auxiliary Fund	1167	1191	998	1069	1069	1252	1164	1406
Average Annual Contribution of each Member to the	Yearly Collection	4 $\frac{1}{2}d$	4 d	5 $\frac{1}{2}d$	8 $\frac{3}{4}d$	6 d	13 d	9 $\frac{1}{4}d$	6 $\frac{1}{2}d$
	July Do. ....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Book-Room	4 $\frac{3}{4}d$	..	2 $\frac{3}{4}d$	4 $\frac{3}{4}d$	4 $\frac{1}{4}d$	3 $\frac{1}{2}d$	4 d	4 $\frac{1}{2}d$
	Schools	4 d	4 d	4 $\frac{1}{4}d$	4 d	3 $\frac{3}{4}d$	4 $\frac{1}{2}d$	4 $\frac{1}{2}d$	5 d
	Auxiliary Fund	3 $\frac{1}{4}d$	3 $\frac{1}{4}d$	2 $\frac{1}{2}d$	2 $\frac{1}{4}d$	2 $\frac{3}{4}d$	3 $\frac{1}{4}d$	2 $\frac{3}{4}d$	3 $\frac{1}{4}d$
Preachers' Wives.	Total No. to be provided for ..	136	182	200	144	204	176	203	208
	No. provided by Societies	78	103	109	112	127	171	105	181
	Do. Do. Auxiliary Fund ....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Do. Do. Contingent Fund ...	58	79	91	32	77	5	11	27

TABLE III.		1805	1806	1807	1808	1809	1810	1811	1812
Total Annual Contribution of the Connexion to the	{ Yearly Collection..... July Do..... Book-Room..... Schools..... Auxiliary Fund.....	3152 .. 1945 2295 1710	3365 .. 2000 2677 1972	3489 .. 2986 1633 2353	3609 .. 2539 4316 2561	3800 .. 2050 3035 2666	4306 .. 2600 3566 3172	7776x .. 3000 3321 2973	4534 .. 3000 3392 2723
Average Annual Contribution of each Member to the	{ Yearly Collection..... July Do..... Book-Room..... Schools..... Auxiliary Fund.....	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ d .. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d 4d	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ d .. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ d 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ d	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ d .. 6d 3d 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ d .. 5d 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d	6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d .. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ d .. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d 6d 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	12 $\frac{3}{4}$ d .. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d	7d .. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d 5d 4d
Preachers' Wives.	{ Total No. to be provided for.. No. provided by Societies.... Do. Do. Auxiliary Fund..... Do. Do. Contingent Fund...	217 217	221 221	231 231	247 247	266 266	266 266	300 300	321 321

TABLE III.		1813	1814	1815	1816	1817	1818	1819	1820
Total Annual Contribution of the Connexion to the	<div> <div>Yearly Collection</div> <div>July Do.....</div> <div>Book-Room.....</div> <div>Schools.....</div> <div>Auxiliary Fund.....</div> </div>	4833	9223x	5491	5528	4745	5076	5505	5200
		..	..	..	3478	2581	2598	4929x	2512
		1383	5485	3300	3548	10614x	4300	4746	5000
		4101	5229	5418	5933	4675	4644	5512	5079
		3333	3330	..	..	..	..	..	2584
Average Annual Contribution of each Member to the	<div>Yearly Collection.....</div> <div>July Do.....</div> <div>Book-Room.....</div> <div>Schools.....</div> <div>Auxiliary Fund.....</div>	7d	12 $\frac{1}{3}$ d	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ d	6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	6d	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d
		..	..	..	4 $\frac{1}{4}$ d	3d	3d	6d	3d
		1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	4 $\frac{1}{4}$ d	4 $\frac{1}{4}$ d	13d	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d
		6d	7d	7d	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d
		4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	..	..	..	..	..	3d
Preachers' Wives.	<div>Total No. to be provided for..</div> <div>No. provided by Societies....</div> <div>Do. Do. Auxiliary Fund....</div> <div>Do. Do. Contingent Fund...</div>	345	377	401	449	483	501	548	567
		345	377	401	549	483	501	548	567
	
	

TABLE III.		1821	1822	1823	1824	1825	1826	1827	1828
Total Annual Contribution of the Connexion to the	Yearly Collection	5244	5402	5479	5587	5759	5655	5601	5701
	July Do.....	2619	2763	2914	2928	3122	2891	2924	2976
	Book-Room.....	5000	4500	4000	3000	3000	3000	1500	1400
	Schools.....	6331	6270	..	..	6803	7433	6647	6589
	Auxiliary Fund.....	2648	2741	2772	2838	3131	2937	2929	..
Average Annual Contribution of each Member to the	Yearly Collection.....	6 $\frac{1}{4}d$	6d	5 $\frac{3}{4}d$	5 $\frac{3}{4}d$	6d	5 $\frac{3}{4}d$	5 $\frac{1}{2}d$	5 $\frac{1}{2}d$
	July Do.....	3d	3d	3d	3d	3 $\frac{1}{4}d$	3d	3 $\frac{3}{4}d$	2 $\frac{3}{4}d$
	Book-Room.....	5 $\frac{3}{4}d$	5d	4 $\frac{1}{4}d$	3d	3 $\frac{1}{4}d$	3d	1 $\frac{3}{4}d$	1 $\frac{1}{4}d$
	Schools.....	7 $\frac{1}{2}d$	7d	..	..	7d	7 $\frac{1}{2}d$	6 $\frac{1}{2}d$	6 $\frac{1}{4}d$
	Auxiliary Fund.....	3d	3d	3d	3 $\frac{1}{4}d$	3 $\frac{1}{4}d$	3d	3 $\frac{3}{4}d$	..
Preachers' Wives.	Total No. to be provided for..	565	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	No. provided by Societies....	565	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Do. Do. Auxiliary Fund....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Do. Do. Contingent Fund...	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

PROPOSITION I.

IN CIVIL SOCIETY, THE RULERS DERIVE THEIR EXISTENCE FROM THE PEOPLE; BUT IN RELIGIOUS SOCIETY, THE PEOPLE OWE THEIR EXISTENCE TO THEIR TEACHERS.

THIS proposition speaks of existence, not of authority. No human language can fully develop the importance of this distinction. The order is inverted; there is a direct exchange of cause and effect. If there were no people to be governed, there need be no kings to rule; and, it is equally true, if there were no teachers of Christianity, there would be no christian community.—A disregard to this capital distinction is the chief cause of the endless and ruinous blunders committed in ecclesiastical affairs. In civil affairs, the old adage is weighty; *vox populi, vox Dei*; *the voice of the people is the voice of God*; and no government can long withstand the patient, determinate, and unanimous expression of public opinion.—Give the people all the parts of a subject on which to guide its decisions, and it is next to impossible for the public to think wrong. Hence, as civil associations are not merely voluntary, but essential to the conservation of human life and property, arises the right of the people to chose the form or mode of the civil constitution. But, in religious communities, the instructors and the instructed stand in widely-different relations.—The primary appointment to the sacred ministry could not be derived from a religious body, before that body existed. Whence then? “through the will of God,” 1 Cor. i. 1.—Eph. i. 1.—Titus i. 1.—

“not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.” Gal. i. 1.—“By the commandment of God our Saviour, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Tim. i. 1. Whatever satire may be directed against the *jus divinum*, or divine right of christian ministers, it must be apparent that in the outset of Christianity, certain men were appointed by Christ to go forth and preach the Gospel. By their itinerant ministry, churches were formed, which were afterwards governed by their discipline. They are called Rulers—Heb. vii. 17.—1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.—Timothy and Titus had such a power of regulating and governing churches without any one being united with them in power. “For, if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall HE TAKE CARE of the church of God?” 1 Tim. iii. 5.—“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that THOU shouldest set in order the things that are wanted, and ordain elders in every city, as I HAD APPOINTED THEE.” As the number of Churches increased, and their personal management became unwieldy or impracticable, the Apostles chose subordinate workmen in the vineyard of the Lord. These subordinates were termed guides, presbyters, elders, pastors, overseers, and bishops; which terms were indiscriminately applied to the same person and to the same office.—Acts xx. 17, 28.—Titus i. 5, 6, 7.—1 Peter v. 1, 2.

It is altogether needless to entangle the subject in the labyrinths of Church History; or to show how these subordinate offices, first indiscriminately applied, afterwards became distinct offices; and how the overseer or bishop obtained precedence, and rose to such astonishing ascendancy before the close of the fourth century. Each century will supply illustrations and cautions on Church governments; but no age can be set up as any *authority* in the question. A defender of Methodism, as it is, may contend

for it as a proper model to subsequent ages of the Christian Church, as any former period should be quoted as an example or authority for us. All that is required *now*, is to show that the proposition itself is true in relation to Methodism. The ramifications of the principle will appear under their just propositions.

“ In November, 1738,” says Mr. Wesley*, “ two or three persons who desired to flee from the wrath to come, and then seven or eight more came to me in London, and desired me to advise and pray with them. I said, ‘ If you will meet me on Thursday night, I will help you as well as I can.’ More and more then desired to meet with them, till they were increased to many hundreds. The case was afterwards the same at Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, and many other parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland.—It may be observed, the desire was on *their* part, not *mine*.—My desire was to live and die in retirement. But I did not see that I could refuse them my help, and be guiltless before God.—Here commenced my power; viz. a power to appoint when, and where, and how, they should meet; and to remove those, whose life showed that they had no desire to “ flee from the wrath to come.”—And this power remained the same, whether the people meeting together were twelve, twelve hundred, or twelve thousand.—In a few days, some of them said, ‘ Sir, we will not *sit under you* for nothing. We will subscribe quarterly.’ I said, ‘ I will have nothing, for I want nothing. My fellowship supplies me with all, and more than I want.’—One replied, ‘ Nay, but you want £115. to pay for the lease of the Foundry; and likewise a large sum of money will be wanting to put it into repair.—On this consideration, I suffered them to subscribe.—When

* Minutes, vol. i. page 58.

the Society met, I asked, ‘ Who will take the trouble of receiving this money, and paying it where it is needful?’ One said, ‘ I will do it, and keep the account for you.’ So here was the first steward. Afterwards I desired one or two more to help me as stewards, and, in process of time, a greater number. Let it be remarked, it was I, myself, not the people, who chose these stewards, and appointed to each the distinct work, wherein he was to help me, as long as I desired. And herein I began to exercise another sort of *power*, namely, that of appointing and removing stewards. After a time, a young man came, J. Maxfield, and said, he desired to help me, as a son in the gospel. Soon afterwards came a second, Thomas Richards, and a third, Thomas Westall.—These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labour when and where I should direct. Observe, these likewise desired *me*, not I *them*. But I durst not refuse their assistance. And here commenced my *power*, to appoint each of these, when, where, and how to labour; i. e. while he chose to continue with me: for each had a power to go away when he pleased; as I had also, to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same when the number of preachers increased. I had just the same power still to appoint when, and where, and how each should help me, and to tell any, if I saw cause, ‘ I do not desire your help longer.’ On these terms, and no other, we joined at first; on these we continue joined. But they do me no favour in being directed by me.—It is true, my reward is with the Lord; but, at present, I have nothing from it but trouble and care, and often a burden, I scarcely know how to bear. In 1744, I wrote to several clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the Gospel, desiring them to meet me in London, to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God. They did not desire this meeting, but I

did: knowing that ‘in a multitude of counsellors there is safety.’ And when their number increased, so that it was neither needful nor convenient to invite them all, for several years I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and these only met at the place appointed, till I gave a general permission, that all who desired it, might come.—Observe, I myself sent for these, of my own free choice; and I sent for them to *advise*, not *govern* me.—Neither did I at any time divest myself of any part of that *power* above described, which the providence of God had cast upon me, without any design or choice of mine.—What is that power? It is a power of admitting into, and excluding from, the Societies under my care.—Of choosing and removing Stewards, of receiving or not receiving Helpers, (i. e. Itinerant Preachers) of appointing them when, where, and how, to help me; and of desiring any of them to meet me, when I see good.—And as it was merely in obedience to the providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted this power, which I never sought, nay, a hundred times laboured to throw off; so it is on the same considerations, not for profit, honour, or pleasure, that I use it at this day.—But several gentlemen are much offended at my having *so much power*. My answer to them is this; I did not seek any part of this power. It came upon me unawares; but when it was come, not daring to bury that talent, I used it to the best of my judgment.—Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now, bear it as my burden; the burden which God lays upon me, and therefore I dare not yet lay it down.—But if you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I may transfer this burden, who *can* and *will* do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you.—But some of our Helpers say, ‘This is shackling free-born Englishmen,’ and demand a free Conference; that is, a meeting of all the Preachers, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes.—I answer it is possible,

after my death, something of this kind may take place; but not while I live. To *me* the preachers have engaged themselves to submit ‘to serve me as *sons in the gospel*.’ But they are not engaged to any man, or number of men besides.—To *me* the people in general will submit, but they will not yet submit to any other.—It is nonsense then to call my using *this power*, ‘shackling free-born Englishmen.’—None needs to submit to it, unless he will; so there is no shackling in the case. Every Preacher and every Member may leave me when he pleases.—But while he chooses to stay, it is on the same terms that he joined me at first.—‘But this is *arbitrary power*; this is no less than making yourself a Pope.’—If by *arbitrary power* you mean a power which I exercise singly, without any colleagues therein, this is certainly true; but I see no hurt in it.—*Arbitrary*, in this sense, is a very harmless word.—If you mean *unjust, unreasonable, or tyrannical*, then it is not true.—As to the other branch of the charge, it carries no face of truth. The Pope affirms, that every Christian must do all he bids, and believe all he says, under pain of damnation. I never affirmed any thing that bears any, the most distant resemblance to this.—All I affirm is, ‘The preachers who choose to labour with me, choose to serve me as sons in the gospel,’ and ‘the people who choose to be under my care, choose to be so, on the same terms they were at first.—Therefore all talk of this kind is highly injurious to *me* who bear this burden merely for *your* sakes. And it is exceedingly mischievous to the people, tending to confound their understandings, and to fill their hearts with evil surmisings and unkind tempers towards *me*; to whom they really owe more, for taking all this load upon me, for exercising this very *power*, for shackling myself in this manner, than for all my preaching put together.—Because, preaching twice or thrice a day is no burden to me at all; but the care of all the preachers, and all the people, is a

burden indeed.”—This extraordinary document, written nearly seventy years ago, when the conflicts of 1797 and 1828 could not be anticipated; not only validates the proposition, as it regards Wesleyan Methodism; but also exhibits, as to its essential lineaments, a just portraiture of the origin of every truly christian society or church.

To talk about the rights of a people before a people exists, is really childish. After a christian community has been raised by the preaching of the Gospel; when they, “*which in time past, WERE NOT A PEOPLE, but now are the people of God** ;” certain compacts or stipulations may be covenanted between preachers and people, in order to perpetuate christian ordinances essential to “the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ†.”—Such covenants ought to be sacredly kept by both parties.—Thus, in the outset of the question, the analogy between a civil and a religious Society fails; and this failure demonstrates the absurdity of running out a parallelism between two subjects totally dissimilar in their nature; and of maintaining popular rights in religious governments, to be grounded on a co-origin with rulers, as in the case of civil constitutions. Eighteen centuries of the christian era have transpired, and how very few men have perceived that true religion is of too delicate a fabric, to be propelled forward by the coarse implements of human sanctions; and what a strong tendency still exists even in the acts of foreign and home legislations, to confound civil rights and authority, with those that are purely moral and religious.

* 1 Peter ii. 10.

† Ephesians iv. 12.

PROPOSITION II.

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THE SUBORDINATE OFFICES OF A CHURCH, GENERATED
BY A CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, CAN EXIST NO LONGER
THAN THE MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS CONTINUE TO
BE EXERCISED.

THIS proposition, like the former, refers to existence, not to authority; and must command the prompt and unequivocal assent of every thinking mind. Suppose a simultaneous cessation of the christian ministry, to take place throughout the Connexion; where, then, are its Officers? its Leaders, Trustees, and Stewards? Defunct, most assuredly; not that the extinction would be instantaneous, no more than total darkness would immediately succeed the sun's setting. It offers no relief to say, "Let the Local Preachers substitute the Itinerants." The substitution grants the proposition, though the taste and habits of the Connexion would not accept the exchange. Against this it may be retaliated, "that a simultaneous withdrawment of pecuniary support would obliterate the ministry."—Not so. The withdrawment would most certainly derange, if not dissolve the Connexion; but the extinction of the ministry would not necessarily follow.—In the event of a total defection of the Societies, the hands of the Wesleyan Itinerant Preachers could minister unto their own necessities*; they would throw themselves on the out-field population; believing that HE, who said "*Go and preach,*" would be with them

* Acts xx. 34.

in the bounties of his Providence, “always even unto the end of the world*.”—Of this we have a splendid instance in the Non-Conformist Divines, when two thousand holy men, rather than subscribe to articles affecting their conscience, relinquished their support from the national Church. They continued to preach, though under distressing limitations† : *a new people were raised*, and meeting-houses were built. Had the tenure of their meeting-houses been placed on the Wesleyan model, the present inculcation of Arian and Socinian doctrines, in many of those edifices, could not have taken place. But more of this in the sequel.—To argue a simultaneous cessation of the christian ministry, or a total defection of the Societies; is to assume a posture of things that will never occur: yet it will be frequently needful to push the rationale to its farthest limits, like the algebraic equation of a quantity less than nothing, in order to show a candid objector the results of his own premises. Humiliating as this second proposition may appear to the newly-created subordinate officer, pluming himself on his brief authority, like “the pismire of quality, with the white straw of office in his mouth;” no truism is more self-evident.—The argument is placed on the basis of “human rights;” a chosen ground to many.—Divine, scriptural, or moral obligation is at present out of the question.—Humanly speaking, a minister has no more “natural” obligation to *preach*, than his audience has to *hear*; so that argue the proposition upon any basis, the result will eventually issue the same.

* Matthew xxviii. 20.

† Calamy’s Non-Conformist Memorial; *passim*.

PROPOSITION III.

THAT OFFICE, POSSESSING PRETEREITY OF EXISTENCE AND PRIORITY OF IMPORTANCE, OUGHT TO HAVE THE DIRECTING SWAY.

THIS proposition is deducible from the two former, and commends itself to every man's conscience. In a church, the ascendant office is the ministry; and its superiority is, 1. *Authorised by SCRIPTURE.* 2. *Assumed by the CONFERENCE-MINUTES.* 3. *Grounded on REASON.* 4. *Established by NECESSITY.* 5. *Exemplified by FACT.*

1. *Authorised by SCRIPTURE.*—A christian minister is divinely called to preach the Gospel; collect converts into christian communion; to watch over them; to promote public piety by reproving, comforting, teaching, admitting, expelling, as occasions need. To transmit the doctrines, discipline, and privileges of a church, unimpaired and uncorrupted, to successive agents; to promote a spirit of liberality, benevolence, charity, and mercy.—Let the reader consult the following texts: Jeremiah iii. 15.—Ezekiel ii. 7.—iii. 17, 18.—Malachi ii. 7.—Matthew x. 40.—xxviii. 19.—Luke x. 16.—John xiii. 20.—1 Cor. iii. 10.—iv. 1, 15, 21.—ix. 18.—xvi. 16.—2 Cor. iv. 20.—x. 8.—xiii. 10.—1 Thess. v. 12, 17.—2 Thess. iii. 12, 14.—1 Timothy ii. 2.—iv. 11.—Hebrews v. 4.—xiii. 7. 17.—1 Peter v. 1.

2. *Assumed by the CONFERENCE-MINUTES.*—“ To save souls; watch over them; speak plain and home to

them; labour for this purpose; examine Members seriously, from house to house; *enforce* domestic religion and private prayer; preach expressly and strongly against sabbath breaking, drunkenness, evil speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness of spirit; reform the nation, by protesting publicly and privately against common abuses, preaching once a month against national sins; against disloyalty; smuggling in any kind or degree visit by expulsion; warn against bribery at elections; enjoin upon bankrupts the duty of making restitution, if able; expel any Member who has become bankrupted by creating a fictitious capital by bill-drawing; examine each Leader concerning his method of meeting his class; see that every man keeps our rules; divide every class above thirty members; forbid anthems in divine worship; discountenance bands of music and theatrical singing at charity sermons; sing no hymns of mean composition; sing without formality, and not too slow; allow no singing after you have closed the service; discourage camp meetings, they may suit America, but not England; meet the children weekly, and strive to promote juvenile piety; inculcate domestic economy; spend no more time with the rich than the poor; visit the sick; suffer none to exhort or preach in any of our Societies without proper authority; suffer no collections to be made for Chapels without our authority."

These extracts, taken *verbatim* from the Minutes, must shew that the right of pastorship was assumed by the preachers to be founded on scripture, and admitted by the good sense of the Societies. Consult the Minutes, *in loc*, for the years 1744, 1746, 1766, 1767, 1768, 1770, 1775, 1779, 1782, 1786, 1787, 1792, 1794, 1799, 1803, 1805, 1806, 1807, 1808, 1811, 1815, 1820, 1821.

3. *Grounded on REASON.* There must be a directing

sway somewhere; subject to restrictions of course. The proper checks will be noticed in their proper place. The advocates of "equal claims" must be prepared to show,

1. That the subordinate offices are co-ordinate with the ministerial power.
2. That the qualification to sustain those offices are derived from other sources than the teaching of Christianity.
3. In the event of the ministerial functions ceasing, the subordinate officers can carry on *all* the ordinances, institutions, and designs of a Church.

The futility of such a supposition has been shown in the former propositions; and every subordinate officer, who thinks at all, must allow his office to be derivative or secondary, and not primary. The consciousness of this derivation presses the objector on all sides as the atmosphere he breathes. In what way can this authority be more leniently manifested, to be visible at all, than by prescribing the form or mode of laws offered to general sanction or rejection?—If the Societies prescribe the mode or form, they would be the legislators, and not the Conference; if the Conference and Societies *conjointly* prescribe the mode, then would be no superiority, but a strict equality. Is such an equality consonant to reason? Is it not too much of the Ptolemaic system; the sun whirling round the earth? To this reasoning it is objected by some, that mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles, and by Cyprian, Mosheim, Campbell, Dwight and others, of the participation that private Members had in the management of Church affairs; yet no writer has yet proved, or can prove, this participation to have been a co-legislation.—Stress is laid on this point, because the enemies of Methodism have quoted these authorities with no little haughtiness; and, assuming them as proofs of co-legislation, have so placed the quotations in juxtaposition with Methodism, as to insinuate that the Members of the Connexion have no participation whatever in the management of its affairs.—On this point a con-

temporary writer thus quotes from Mosheim ; “ It was, therefore, the assembly of the people which chose their own rulers or teachers, or received them by a free and authoritative consent when recommended by others. The same people rejected or confirmed by their suffrages, the laws proposed by their rulers to the assembly ; excommunicated profligate and unworthy members of the church ; restored the penitent to their forfeited privileges ; passed judgment upon the different subjects of controversy and discussion, that arose in their communities ; examined and decided the disputes which happened between the elders and deacons ; and, in a word, exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the sovereign power.”—A more unfit quotation to establish “ equal claims,” or co-legislation, could not have been selected ; the whole paragraph being in substance, an exact echo of the Conference-Minutes. Has not every one of the Itinerant Preachers been chosen by the Circuits ; each Quarterly Meeting being “ an assembly” of its local officers ? Mosheim says, the laws emanated from “ THE RULERS” which “ the same people rejected or confirmed.” Is not this precisely the case with the Wesleyan Connexion ? Have not the Leaders’ Meetings repeatedly “ excommunicated profligate and unworthy Members, and restored the penitent to their forfeited privileges ?” We have no adequate perception of the interior character, or vestry-machinery of the Christian Church, in the early ages.—Time has thrown an impenetrable veil of obscurity over the whole. There may be different grades of participation without co-legislation ; but, where strict co-legislation exists, where the power of the people becomes co-existent and co-ordinate with the ministerial power, action ceases ; all things remain *in statu quo* ; all effective motion stops ; the disputed question vibrates from people to ministers, and from ministers to people, like the oscillations

of a pendulum, and must continue so to do, until the question is either determined by an appeal to a higher tribunal, to some umpire or moderator; or, the *two* parties, by reciprocal concurrence, become absorbed into *one*, like two bulbs of mercury coming into contact. As this subject will be amplified in a subsequent proposition on checks or limitations, it is enough now to observe, that the absorption or unity will yield matter of triumph either to preachers or people; if to the latter, the measure presents the unscriptural anomaly of spiritual children governing their spiritual fathers.—Under all this reiterated cant of “equal claims,” this nauseating verbosity about “civil rights;” is deposited a deep and broad substratum of a specious and refined libertinism; that denies or conceals the scriptural obligation “to obey them that are over us in the Lord.” The duty of children venerating parents, of servants obeying masters, of subjects honoring kings; is not more obligatory or more positively enjoined, than the duty of christians obeying their ministers.—In either of the four relations just mentioned, the obedience must apply to things indifferent; to any thing not determined in the word of God. In things enjoined of God the obedience is properly rendered to God, and not to human authority. In things forbidden of God, obedience to human authority must be resolutely withheld; but this cautiousness was never designed by God to be so punctiliously applied to things purely indifferent, as to vitiate the **AUTHORITY ITSELF**; leaving it

“a headless carcase and a nameless thing.”

4. *Established by NECESSITY.*—A moderate attention to Church Government will show, that various rules and regulations, as in the case of Methodism, rose out of circumstances; and, many, if not all, of its regulations were so blended with the administration of christian ordinances,

as to render their dissociation impossible. In most instances, the human regulation was nothing more than the christian ordinance modified and adjusted to the existing attitude of affairs. From this amalgamation of creaturely enactments and divine institutions, arose the necessity of the administrator of the one, becoming the administrator of the other. There was no alternative. So far from this being a trivial view of the question, many advocates of popular government in church affairs have candidly acknowledged, though Laymen have been seated on the legislative bench with their pastors; this entanglement of human rules, with the administration of christian ordinances, has so puzzled them, as to urge a consignment of the whole executive to pastoral management. All the difference subsisting between a church so constituted, and the Wesleyan-Economy, is this: In the former, the consignment is made *IN DOORS*; in the latter, the consignment is made *OUT OF DOORS*. As a consignment, in all such cases, must be made by one of the parties; by whom ought it to be done? Can a minister divest himself of the duties, powers, and responsibilities essential to an office derived from the Almighty? Is a minister left, *ad libitum*, to his own option? Were he so disposed, he cannot and dares not vacate his station without involving most fearful consequences.

5. *Exemplified by FACT.* Is it not surprising that men can be found deliberately to disallow what is of universal and daily occurrence? Look at any of the numerous denominations into which the christian world is dissected. Can one be found where the ordinary routine of church-business is not undertaken by its respective ministers? The argument does not refer to a temporary fermentation, immediately before or after some reform, schism, or revolution in a religious sect; but to the uniform steady consue-

tudinary habits of preachers and people. Do not laymen of every denomination manifest strong and general repugnance to engage in religious activities, that may divert their minds from domestic duties, literary pursuits, or commercial engagements? Duties obviously devolving, in thousands of instances, on subordinate officers; and which ministers feel equal repugnance to undertake, must be executed by the ministers, or the duties will be unfulfilled. These cases occur in independent Churches; and in the Wesleyan Connexion, where the effects of Itinerancy pervade every part, and touch every fibre of the system, the fact is still more visible and necessitous. Is there either truth, justice, or gratitude, in upbraiding ministers with the "assumption of sole power;" for having thousands of times performed tasks, trivial in themselves, but essential to the completeness of the whole, and which, the complainants alone ought to have done? Is "THE CARE OF THE CHURCHES" not enough, but ministers must traverse a town, and "box the compass," as mariners term it, "to its thirty-two points," to urge members to use their power for the common good? The general and unsolicited consignment of vestry-business to pastoral guidance and management, must either indicate. 1. An honourable repose of the Societies on the wisdom, integrity, and diligence of their spiritual rulers. 2. A deeply culpable apathy, adapted to ruin the best constructed society in the world; or 3. An ignorant credulity, not at all in keeping with the spiritual intelligence of the Connexion. The true origin, nature, and extent of this consignment, will be shewn in the sequel.

PROPOSITION IV.

SO LONG AS THE SUBSISTENCE OF THE WESLEYAN ITINERANT MINISTERS, DEPENDS ON VOLUNTARY SUPPLIES; THE GREAT PURPOSES OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ARE BEST PROMOTED BY THEIR LEGISLATING IN MUTUAL CONNEXION.

THE word CONNEXION very aptly and felicitously designates the essential and intrinsic character of the Wesleyan Body: from CON, *together*; and NECTO, *to knit, weave, entwine, &c.* Its import materially differs from JUNCTION, or UNION. In many instances there may be junction or union, without connexion; but there cannot be connexion without junction or union. Suppose two cases; 1. The ground-floor of a house is laid with tessellated squares or quarries: These *individual* squares or quarries are cemented together, and *conjunctively* produce the given style or pattern of stone-work; but the floor is not thereby covered with *one stone*. Here, then, is a union or junction, but not a connexion in the radical sense of the word. One species of stone, laid on that floor, may be much more susceptible of atmospheric humidity, or of friction, than another species on the same floor; and by their dissimilar qualities, the *entire* becomes disjointed long before its expected durability has expired. 2. Suppose another case. A table is covered with damask-cloth: in the fabricating of that damask, the threads of the woof are, by a previous adjustment of the loom, so interwoven with the threads of the warp, as to bring out the intended con-

figuration of the damask. The configurations may be made to vary, perhaps *ad infinitum*, with the same warp and woof; but, in every case, the texture is one, and its durability or decay will be uniform throughout. The simile is not trivially or capriciously applied to Methodism; but, in many important senses, illustrates the true genius of the Wesleyan Connexion. Methodism has been compelled, by the combined influence of uncontrollable events, to undergo different aspects or configurations; but, the warp and woof of its fabric; the grand characteristics, principles, and designs of Methodism, have remained unchanged and unmutated. The point, however, now under discussion, is not to prove or disprove the alleged apostasy of the Connexion from the first principles, but to ascertain if the CON and NECTO, the interweaving or unity of the system, be such as to render any re-organization absurd or impracticable. Recur to the first metaphor of the tessellated ground-floor, to illustrate the coalition of different independent churches to obtain a conjoined, important result. The object sought must not be merely *common to all*, but an object that must not sacrifice the essential independence of any one of the churches. A church, really independent, can neither give nor take interference, however serious or necessitous the case; the inviolability of its own jurisdiction absolutely forbidding all interposition whatever. Circumvallated and inaccessible, it presumes on its own competency to meet and overcome every exigency that may transpire within its enclosure. This independency, however, does not prohibit confederation against a common enemy; the case of Lord Sidmouth's Bill, well known to the Methodists and Dissenters, being an apt illustration. The simultaneous combination of thousands of men whose consciences were then invaded, presented overwhelming petitions and remonstrances against the bill, which speedily led to its abandonment. Though, on that occasion, many

of the Dissenters acquitted themselves with great credit; yet the *unity of the Wesleyan Societies* mainly contributed to that splendid triumph of Religious Liberty. The confederation of independent churches, directing its confederacy solely to *external* operations, may be farther elucidated by reference to the Germanic Confederation; and, as this allusion relates to their coalition against a *foreign* enemy, and not to *interior* legislation, the allusion does not stultify the first proposition. That extensive country is subdivided into a great number of independent states, which are united in a political confederation called the Germanic confederation. The objects of the confederation are, the maintenance of the external and internal surety of Germany, and the independence and inviolability of the confederated states. The affairs of the Confederation are confided to a **FEDERATIVE DIET**, in which all the Members may vote by their plenipotentiaries, either individually or collectively, in the following manner: Austria, *four votes*; Prussia, *four*; Bavaria, *four*; Saxony, *four*; Hanover, *four*; Wirtemberg, *four*; Baden, *three*; Electoral Hesse or Hesse Cassel, *three*; Grand Duchy of Hesse, or Hesse Darmstadt, *three*; Denmark, for Holstein, *three*; Low Countries, for Luxemburg, *three*; Brunswick, *two*; Nassau, *two*; Mecklenburg-Schwerin, *two*; Strelitz, *one*; Nassau lower, *two*; Saxe Weimar, *one*; Gotha, *one*; Coburg, *one*; Meinungen, *one*; Hildburghausen, *one*; Holstein Oldenburg, *one*; Anhalt-Dessau, *one*; Anhalt-Bernburg, *one*; Anhalt-Kotthen or Cothen, *one*; Schwartzburg Sonderhausen, *one*; Schwartzburg Rudolstadt, *one*; Hohenzollern Hechingen, *one*; Lichenstein, *one*; Hohenzollern Sigmaringen, *one*; Waldeck, *one*; Elder Reus, *one*; Younger Reus, *one*; Schaumburg-Lippe, *one*; Lippe, *one*; Frankfort, *one*; Bremen, *one*; Hamburg, *one*; Lubeck, *one*; **TOTAL, sixty-nine votes.** — Austria presides

at the Federative Diet. Almost every prince in Germany, of which there are many, is uncontrolled in the government of his own territories; but, in regard to foreign nations, they form one great confederacy, governed by general laws of policy. This elucidation can only serve to show that the coalition of Independent Churches is applicable to *external* relations, and not to *internal* governments. Here arises a question: What is the primary inducement of Independent Churches to coalesce? is it to save one another? No. Though that is *a* motive, it is not **THE** motive; for each church, conscious of being unable to conquer the foe, and dreading *its own extinction*, coalesces to save itself. But, if a foe arises **WITHIN**, what then can be done? Nothing. Its independency is its ruin! The principle of exclusiveness, which aforesime refused interference, now closes the avenue to all redress: Have not such ecclesiastical suicides occurred? Under what circumstances may they again occur? 1. When the majority of its members resist christian discipline, or espouse heterodox tenets. 2. When the minority of numbers becomes the majority of influence, and that influence is employed to bribe and corrupt the minister in his pastoral fidelity. In either of these cases, nothing can save that church from total apostasy; which is tantamount to its extinction, for all valid and pious purposes. An influential member sins in the face of day; to that same member the minister owes his pastorship over that church, or is under special obligations. How must the minister act in such a juncture? The mind of God is sufficiently plain. The unrepenting delinquent cannot retain his communion in that church, unless the minister abandon his station, or compromise his character and conscience. Here, the advantages, assumed to be enjoyed by an Independent Church, are more than counterbalanced by its incapability

of meeting such a critical case*. The intention of this proposition is not to shew the disadvantages of **INDEPENDENCY**, but the advantages of **CONNEXION**. Some of the peculiar excellencies may be mentioned: 1. Great bodies are far less liable to fluctuations, than small ones. 2. Three or four hundred ministers are more likely to form a correct judgment of cases under discussion, than one or two individuals. 3. All parties have one *common* standard of appeal. 4. Protection is afforded to uncorrupted, faithful minorities; against a powerful local faction. 5. Preachers, acting in concert by united counsels; yet *collectively* depending on the Societies for support; will always furnish a check or corrective against misrule. 6. A consolidation of doctrines, discipline, privileges, and duties; requisite to accomplish great moral operations on Society.

* A few years ago, a gay young gentleman, the son of a pious worthy person, was met by an Independent Minister. "How are you?" said the Minister, "shall I see you at the preaching on Thursday evening?" The graceless dandy replied, with much *sang froid*, "I don't know, sir, I am not determined whether to go that night to the theatre or to the chapel." The reply met with no rebuke. The young man goes to his associates, tells them his answer, and adds; "You see, boys, the parson owes his recent great increase of salary to my father's patronage, and so I escaped clear!" Allowing, however, the minister's silence to be ascribed to momentary absence of mind, and not to any dereliction of duty; how came the despicable notion into the young man's head? Was it at school, learning his Latin Syntax?

"Imperat, aut servit, collecta pecunia cuique,"
 that he first imagined a rich layman may do as he thinks proper with his pastor? Was not the sanctity of the ministerial character prostrate at the young man's feet? These queries are not applied to the minister; he had reasons, perhaps valid to his own mind, why he did not *then* reprove the youth. A minister of any other denomination might have done the same. The question is with the youth; and was not such an opinion adapted to gain currency, and to inflict the most mischievous consequences? The glory of a Methodist Preacher consists in three things. 1. His maintenance depends, as it ought to be, on his piety and fidelity. 2. He fears no man, however wealthy or powerful, while he himself walks and governs by Scripture and the Minutes. 3. His security supplies nerve to overcome cases too difficult for an isolated Independency to manage.

But, whether the superior advantages lie on the side of **CONNEXION** or not; two insuperable barriers lie against its adoption into the Wesleyan System. 1. **THE CHAPEL TENURES.** 2. **AN ITINERANT MINISTRY.** The former will be discussed in a subsequent proposition on financial economy; the latter stultifies all attempts to institute analogy between a church with a located ministry, and the Wesleyan Societies. If every Preacher, Itinerant and Local, every Trustee, Steward, Leader and Member throughout the Connexion were *disposed* to remodel the Circuits on principles of independent locality; the effort would be *impracticable* without dissolving the whole fabric. To demonstrate the absurdity of the attempt, revert to the Germanic Confederation, and argue the case inversely. The **FEDERATIVE DIET** sapiently recommend a biennial or triennial, interchange of Sovereigns among the *ci-devant* independent states. Bless us all, what a royal bustle! What a packing-up of crowns, sceptres, robes, seals, and other regalia! What a crossing of princely cavalcades on the roads! and, if placemen and statesmen hold their stations at royal pleasure, no stock-jobbing hoax could create a tythe of the ferment as this Royal Itinerancy. More than probable the states would petition the Federative Diet for "popular" kings, as the "frogs of old, petitioned Jupiter." But, what becomes of the inviolability of local jurisdictions in the mean time? Perished, to be sure; and that is the point at issue; which the allusion substantiates. It is as easy to blend day with night, or light with darkness, as to consociate Itinerancy and Local Independency. Independency will destroy Itinerancy; or, Itinerancy will destroy Independency.

Courteous Reader! be not alarmed about the safety of your religious liberties; be patient; the subjects of check will appear by and bye.

PROPOSITION V.

IN NO PERIOD OF METHODIST HISTORY, DID THE CONFERENCE EVER RELINQUISH THE DIRECTING SWAY.

THIS proposition is very important and critical: and, as its truth or error will determine the moral quality and tendency of recent litigations; the subject must be dispassionately approached, uninfluenced by out-door ferments; and its decision grounded solely on authentic records. Immense injury to the general cause of Christ has been inflicted, whether willingly or unwillingly, it is needless in this place to investigate. If the Conference ever relinquished the directing sway, and admitted the Societies to a strict co-legislation, then is substantiated the well known apophthegm of Julian "*Regnandi gratia jus violandum est;*" *that the beauty of governing consists in sacrificing justice.* If, however, the proposition be established, let the thoughtless disputant remember, that "every man must render an account of himself to God." A few preliminary remarks will facilitate just conceptions on this important subject.

The History of Methodism may be divided into three epochs, or eras. FIRST ERA: *from 1738 to 1791; being the period of Mr. Wesley's Autocracy over the Societies.* SECOND ERA: *from 1791 to 1797; being an unlimited, unamenable, ministerial, Aristocracy.* THIRD ERA: *from 1797 to the present time, being a limited, or restricted Aristocracy.*

FIRST ERA.—During Mr. Wesley's life, every Member entered the Society with a previous understanding to yield to the implicit guidance of himself and his various Superintendents, throughout the Connexion. The *primary* design of the Connexion was the spiritual advantage of its Members; the *mode* of effecting the design was uniformly left to the discretion of the Conference, without the least interposition of the people. Mr. Wesley *directed* every concern, and employed Preachers, Stewards, and Leaders, as his subordinate Agents. "The Leaders' business," says Mr. Wesley, "is 1. To see each person in his class once a week; to enquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort them. 2. To receive, what they are *willing* to give, towards the support of the Society. 3. To meet the Assistant, (i. e. Superintendent) and the Stewards once a week. This is the whole and sole business of a Leader, or any number of Leaders. But, it is common for the Assistant, in any place, when several Leaders are met together, to ask their advice as to any thing that concerns either the temporal or spiritual welfare of the Society. This he may, or may not do, as he seems best. I frequently do it in the large Societies. And, on many occasions, I have found it is in the multitude of counsellors, there is safety. 3. From this short view of the origin and design of Leaders it is easy to answer the following questions. 1. What authority has a single Leader? He has authority to meet his class, to receive their contributions, and to visit the sick in his class. 2. What authority have all the Leaders of a Society met together? They have authority to show their class papers to the Assistant, to deliver the money, they have received, to the Stewards, and to bring in the names of the sick. 3. But, have they not authority to restrain the Assistant if they think he acts improperly? No more than any Member of the Society has; after mildly speaking to him, they are to refer the

thing to Mr. Wesley. 4. Have they no authority to hinder a person from preaching? None, but the Assistant has the authority. 5. Have they not authority to displace a particular Leader? No more than the Door-Keeper has. To place and displace Leaders belongs to the Assistant alone. 6. Have they not authority to expel a particular Member of the Society? No, the Assistant only can do this. 7. But have they not authority to regulate the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Connexion? Neither the one nor the other. Temporal affairs belong to the Stewards, spiritual to the Assistant. 8. Have they authority to make any collection of a public nature? No, the Assistant can only do this. 9. Have they authority to receive the Yearly Subscriptions? This also belongs to the Assistant. Considering these things, can we wonder at the confusion which has been here (Dublin) for some years? If one wheel in a machine gets out of its place, what disorder must ensue! In Methodism the discipline regularly stands thus, 1. The Assistant. 2. The Preachers. 3. The Stewards. 4. The Leaders. 5. The People. But here the Leaders, who are the lowest wheel but one, were got quite out of their place: They were quite at the top of all; above the Stewards, the Preachers, yea, above the Assistant himself. To this, chiefly, I impute the gradual decay of the work of God in Dublin*." Here, then, the people had not even the shadow of power to interfere either in the spiritual or temporal affairs of the Connexion. The Wesleyan Societies began in the same way as every truly christian church has begun, whether in Athens, Rome, Britain, or Namacqualand: A few persons go to that preacher, under whose ministrations they obtained spiritual light; they ask the way to heaven; they are formed into a spiritual

* Wesley's Works, vol. xv. p. 17.

family; and the preacher becomes their patriarch. That the early regulations and discussions of the Conference were of the patriarchal character is manifest from the Minutes relating to personal and domestic peculiarities; such as prohibiting or discountenancing the "use of lace, ruffles, snuff, tobacco, drams, tea, powdered hair, artificial curls;"—"making candles for their own use, and thereby cheating the revenue;"—"dancing forbidden; making and selling pills and balsams prohibited;"—"sluts not to spoil preachers' houses;"—"preachers not allowed to go out to supper;"—"not to be from home after nine o'clock in the evening;"—"rise at five;"—"not to ride circuit-horses too hard, and to see that the horses are well groomed; abstaining from all feasts and wakes;"—"travellers not suffered to go and make lodging houses of the preachers' dwellings;"—"no persons permitted to go into preachers' houses, unless they want to ask a needful question; they must not crowd into them, like into coffee houses*."

Some of these regulations assumed the shape of positive injunctions; others, of friendly suggestions. Some of them were confined solely to preachers; others, to the Societies; while a few were enjoined on both preachers and people. While these extracts excite a smile, they also prove that the *entire* was patriarchal. The Connexion, in its progressive expansion, never lost this patriarchal character; but, correspondent to the successive enlargements of the Connexion, grew the magnitude and importance of the questions deliberated; and minor and personal observances were left to the improved and improving sense of the body. Indeed, the Conference could not discretely re-discuss matters of trivial and minor observance, for an obvious

* Minutes for the years 1744, 1765, 1766, 1768, 1776, 1778, 1782, 1784, 1785, 1786, 1789, 1792, 1795, 1796.

reason. Many of the members, though pious and sincere, were extremely illiterate; and, unmindful of the circumstances of age, station, educational prejudices, and early habitudes; interpreted the Conference-suggestions as so many sacred laws, of universal and unrepealable obligation; and, at times, unchristianised brethren of equal piety and conscientiousness. And, on the other hand, the Conference too much venerated the memory of the great Founder of Methodism, to erase those minor regulations from their statutes. Mr. Wesley had his scruples and predilections; but they were all on the side of health, frugality, loyalty, and beneficence. The Connexion grew in favor with God and man; and Mr. Wesley, having lived to witness in his old age, the doctrine and discipline of Methodism deeply radicated in the judgment and affection of preachers and people; said, "the best of all is, God is with us;" then "bowed his head and gave up the ghost."

SECOND ERA.—After Mr. Wesley's death, the pure autocratical form of government was succeeded by a ministerial aristocracy; perhaps the most perfect and uncontrollable upon earth; the people still having no participation, much less co-legislation. Mr. Wesley fully committed the perpetuity and extension of Methodism to the care of the Conference. "Let all things" says he, "go on among those Itinerants who chose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit;"—"do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end*."—"I give all my books now on sale, and the copies of them, subject to a rent

* Minutes, 1785.

charge, &c. in trust for the general fund of the Methodist Conference, in carrying on the work of God by Itinerant Preachers. I give my types, printing presses, and every thing appertaining thereto, &c. in trust for the use of the Conference*."

The Conference, thus *legally* and *methodistically* inducted to supreme authority, exercised *conjointly* those prerogatives which Mr. Wesley maintained *individually*. Such power, however, being susceptible of extensive abuse, by a degenerated priesthood, was not long peaceably enjoyed. The Societies could not settle under this new administration. They foresaw real or imaginary evils, and became extremely uneasy. Uneasiness ripened to almost total insubordination; and the Connexion shook to the foundation. At this juncture, the French Revolution was at its climax. The Bastile was demolished. The long-concealed and cruel atrocities of jesuitical and inquisitorial power were unmantled; and the cry of "DOWN WITH PRIESTCRAFT" reverberated throughout Europe. In this awful crisis, the Conference saw that concessions must be made, or the Connexion would perish. Concessions were made, but not sufficiently ample to silence the clamors of all; and five thousand Members left the Connexion; but the great mass of the Societies were perfectly satisfied; tranquillity was restored; the clouds dispersed; the storm subsided; and the blessed work of conversion was again visible, in the immediate and continuous enlargement of the Societies.

These concessions of 1797, designated by some, "the Magna Charta of Methodism;" have been most egregiously

* Wesley's Will and Testament.

misinterpreted. The truth of the Proposition will appear by comparing what was conceded, with what was retained.

CONCEDED.—1. “We (the Preachers) “have determined to publish annually a very minute account of the disbursement, or application of the yearly collection. 2. A full account of the affairs of Kingswood School. 3. That all bills for the support of Travelling Preachers, and their families, in respect to deficiencies, house-rent, fire, candles, sickness, travelling expenses, and all other matters of a TEMPORAL kind for their support, for which the Circuits cannot provide, shall first meet with the approbation of the Quarterly Meeting, and be signed by the general Steward of the Circuit, before they can be brought to the District Committee. 3. No Circuit shall be divided, till such division has been approved of by their respective Quarterly Meetings, and signed by the general Stewards. 4. No other TEMPORAL matter shall be transacted by the District Committees, till the approbation of the respective Quarterly Meetings be first given, signed by the Circuit Stewards. 5. The Leaders’ Meeting shall have a right to declare any person on trial, improper to be received into the Society : after such declaration, the Superintendent shall not admit such person into the Society. 6. No person shall be expelled from the Society FOR IMMORALITY, till such immorality be proved at a Leaders’ Meeting. 7. No person shall be appointed a Leader or Steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the Leaders’ Meeting: the nomination to be in the Superintendent, and the approbation or disapprobation in the Leaders’ Meeting. 8. No person shall receive a plan as a Local Preacher, without the approbation of a Local Preachers’ Meeting. 9. It is determined that if at any time the Conference see it necessary to make any new rule for the Societies at large, and such rule should be objected to at the first Quarterly

Meeting in any given Circuit; and, if the major part of that Meeting, in conjunction with the Preachers, be "of opinion, that the enforcing of such rule in that circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that circuit;" it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of such Quarterly Meeting, before the second Conference. But, if the rule be confirmed by the second Conference, it shall be binding to the whole Connexion." 10. If the majority of the Trustees of a Chapel, or the majority of the Stewards and Leaders of any Society, believe that any Preacher appointed for their Circuit, is immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities, or that he has broken any of the rules above-mentioned, they shall have authority to summon the Preacher of the District, and all the Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders of the Circuit, to meet in their Chapel on a day and hour appointed, sufficient time being given. The Chairman of the District shall be President of the assembly: and every Preacher, Trustee, Steward, and Leader, shall have a single vote, the Chairman also possessing the casting voice. And if the majority judge that the accused Preacher is immoral, erroneous in doctrines, deficient in abilities, or has broken any of the rules above-mentioned, he shall be considered as removed from that Circuit: and the District Committee shall, as soon as possible, appoint another Preacher for that Circuit, instead of the Preacher so removed: and shall determine among themselves how the removed Preacher shall be disposed of till the Conference, if they judge proper. The District Committee shall also supply, as well as possible, the place of the removed Preacher, till another Preacher be appointed; and the Preacher thus appointed, and all other Preachers shall be subject to the above mode of trial; and if the District Committee do not appoint a Preacher for that Circuit, instead of a removed Preacher, within a month after the aforesaid removal, or do not fill up the place of the removed Preacher till ano-

ther Preacher be appointed, the majority of the said Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders, being again regularly summoned, shall appoint a Preacher for the said Circuit, provided he be a Member of the Connexion, till the ensuing Conference. If any Preacher refuse to submit to the above mode of trial, in any of the cases above-mentioned, he shall be considered as suspended till the Conference ensuing.

11. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in any Chapel, except the majority of the Trustees of that Chapel on the one hand, and the majority of the Stewards and Leaders belonging to that Chapel as the best qualified to give the sense of the people, on the other hand, allow it. Nevertheless, in all cases, the consent of the Conference shall be obtained before the Lord's Supper be administered. 12. The administration of baptism, the burial of the dead, and service in church hours, shall be determined according to the regulations above-mentioned. 13. Before any Superintendent propose a Preacher to the Conference, as proper to be admitted on trial, such Preacher must not only be approved of at the March Quarterly Meeting, but must have read and signed the General Minutes, as fully approving of them.

RETAINED.—1. Itinerancy shall be continued as heretofore. 2. The appointment of Preachers shall remain solely with the Conference. 3. Chapel-Tenures remain unaltered. 4. The Conference, having maturely considered the subject of delegation, are thoroughly persuaded, with many of our Societies, whose letters have been read in full Conference, that they cannot admit any but regular Travelling Preachers into their body, either in the Conference or District Meetings, and preserve the system of Methodism entire, particularly the Itinerant plan, which they are determined to support. But, let it be well observed, that in explaining their minutes, it was fully and explicitly under-

stood, that, if there be any accusation against a Preacher, or any difficult affair to settle, not only the Circuit, or Town-Steward, but any "Leader, or even Member of the Society, shall be admitted as evidence to the District Meeting: provided the matter has been first heard at a Quarterly Meeting." 5. No Trustee, or number of Trustees, shall expel or exclude from their Chapel or Chapels, any Preachers appointed by the Conference*."

The more these extracts are collated and scrutinized, the more conspicuous will appear the weakness of head, or prejudice of heart, which asserts "these concessions deceptive, seeming to promise liberty to the people, yet granting none;" and that "the people gained nothing" by the negotiations of 1795 and 1797. They had an important bearing on the preachers, the people, and the system.

I. THE PREACHERS. 1. *Their honesty as men*; no defalcation, or embezzlement of the funds could take place, but by the apathy of the people, or the collusion of the Stewards. 2. *Their prudence as financiers*. A man may be very honest, but very indiscreet, in money-affairs; i. e. he may apply *all* the money to the purposes of the Institution, for which he is placed *in trust*; but, in a very ill-timed or ill-placed manner. 3. *Their piety as christians*. To preserve this, is an object paramount to all other considerations. "Like priest, like people;" is an old adage; and, in many cases, very true. No instance can be quoted, wherein the Conference defended any Preacher in his immorality, when sufficient evidence of his delinquency had been adduced. Humiliating as the fact

* Minutes, 1795—1797.

*That Conference
is not
to say that
are no such
cases to quote.
If it be the
Conference has been
much maligned*

is, scarcely a year transpires that some one is not cut off from the body, through misconduct; but, "Humanum est errare." To insinuate that the Wesleyan Conference can have an interest in retaining a *convicted* delinquent in the ministry, is tantamount to a charge of insanity against the whole of them. For, "it is certain," says Campbell, "that when authority of any kind is unattended with what are commonly called coercive measures, or the power of the sword, and unsupported by temporal splendour, or worldly sanctions; it is impossible to preserve it among an enlightened people, than by purity of character in those vested with it, and by diligence in the discharge of the duties of their station. In such cases, this is the only foundation on which the respect, obedience, and submission of others can be raised*." 4. *Their ability as Ministers.* This concession relates either to the removal of a Preacher, from any Circuit, imputing ministerial incompetency to him; or, to his total withdrawal from Wesleyan Itinerancy. Since 1797, instances of both have more than once occurred; and would be now specifically detailed, could it be done without inflicting injury upon the suffering parties. 5. *Their fidelity as Rulers.* A ruler is one who exercises a power, to which he has been inducted, to execute laws consentaneously enacted for the common good. Whatever *discretionary* powers may be appended to his constitutional prerogatives, those *discretionary* powers must not abrogate or pervert the original and true *spirit* of the constitution. The same principle, which prohibits the ruler from abusing either his *constitutional*, or his *discretionary* powers; also obligates him to guard those laws from being abrogated or perverted by others. He is guardian of law, as well as administrator. These preliminary notices are

* Lectures on Ecclesiastical History. Ed. III p. 100.

requisite to a just interpretation of Conference-conduct in critical cases. A Superintendent is a plenipotentiary; not of the Conference, nor of the people *separately*, but of both, *conjunctively*; that is, of the constitution. To him is committed a certain locality, or section of the Wesleyan field; to be imbued with a Methodist ministry; to be planted with Wesleyan doctrines, and guarded by Wesleyan discipline; but, the *whole* enclosure, so to speak, is in the occupancy of the constitution.—God and the Constitution require of the Superintendent to cultivate the plot assigned him in the best way, and to the greatest extent. Now, the special design of the “Pacification” was to establish such an interposing counsel, authority, and protection, equally remedial to the Superintendent, or people, of any locality; as, that spiritual cultivation should not be obstructed, either by the arbitrary caprice of a Superintendent on the one hand, or the contumacy of a faction on the other. Moral culture must go on, under any circumstance, or against any opposition. If a Superintendent, from inability could not, or from misrule would not, cultivate the ground allotted him; the “CONCESSIONS” removed him, though nothing immoral, otherwise implicated *his* character. By parity of reason, if a faction will not be cultivated, but obstruct the legitimate ends of a ministry; then, the “Concessions” remove the members of the faction, though nothing immoral otherwise implicate *their* characters. In the former case, the Society, by appealing to the Districts, (which are nothing more than Conference-Committees); or, to the Conference itself, may obtain and *have* obtained, redress. 1. Against the inability, apathy, misrule, or personal caprice of a Superintendent. 2. Against a powerful faction, or defection of the Society; which, under an independency, must have resulted in submission to the faction, or separation from the Church. On the other hand, the Superintendent is protected in the

legitimate exercise of the prerogatives scripturally and constitutionally invested in him. That particular locality or Church, is protected from a moral pollution ; from a profanation of ordinances ; from the ingress of error, whether of doctrine, discipline, or practice, so far as ministerial interposition can be available. If this interposing power, this body-voice, form the palladium of the system, without which, the “unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace,” is impossible in the Connexion ; the instrument wielding it, and the circumstances accompanying it, are of minor importance. The application of this interposing power is, however, thus adjusted by the regulations of 1797. “In order,” say the Minutes “to render our Districts more effective, the President of the Conference shall have power, when applied to, to supply a Circuit with Preachers, if any should die or desist from travelling ; and to sanction any change of Preachers which it may be necessary to make in the intervals of the Conference ; and to assist at any District Meeting, if applied to for that purpose by the Chairman of the District, or by a majority of the Superintendents in such District. And he shall have a right, if written to by any who are concerned, to visit any Circuit, and to enquire into their affairs with respect to Methodism, and, in union with the District-Committee, redress any grievance. The Chairman of each District, in conjunction with his brethren of the Committee, shall be responsible to the Conference for the execution of the laws, as far as his District is concerned. That no Chairman may have cause to complain of the want of power, in cases, which according to his judgment cannot be settled in the ordinary District-Meeting, he shall have authority to summon three of the nearest Superintendents, to be incorporated with the District-Committee, who shall have equal authority to vote, and settle every thing till the Conference. The Conference recommends it to the Superintendents of the Cir-

cuits, to invite, on all important occasions, the Chairman of their respective District, to be present at their Quarterly Meetings."

✓ Much exacerbated hypercriticism has been bestowed by men hostile to Methodism, on the verbal structure of these regulations; in order to fix the charge of insincerity and guile on the Conference-character; but, 1. The Conference never attempted to conceal, or relinquish, their right to the directing sway. 2. The points retained, are the legislative stamina of the system, on which the proposition grounds its validity. It is amusing to observe how diametrically opposite are the conclusions to which the two classes of Anti-Methodists have reasoned themselves. One class avers that the negotiations of 1797 retained the sole power in the hands of the Conference, and that the system is still an unaltered and unamenable aristocracy; the other, that the Conference at that period shared the legislative executive with the people, and that the Body became substantially republican. Neither party is correct. Is the power to keep men honest, NOTHING? Is the right to judge the financial wisdom of the Connexion, NOTHING? Is the power to disrobe an immoral minister of his office, NOTHING? Is the power to weigh in the balance, the competency of a Preacher, NOTHING?

II. The Concessions had also respect to the CONSCIENCES OF THE PEOPLE. The first Methodist Societies were compounded similarly to the Apostolical Churches. The Apostolical Churches were formed, partly of converted Jews, and partly of converted Gentiles. The former retained an hereditary educational attachment to some parts of the Mosaic economy, which they wished to be incorporated with the christian system: the latter, having no such scruples or prejudices, tenaciously repelled the admixture

of Jewish rites. The adjustment of these disputes occasioned more uneasiness to the Apostles than every thing else pertaining to "the care of the Churches." The Conference of 1795 were placed in circumstances equally critical and perplexing. Many of the Members of Society retained a strong educational attachment to the Church of England; others, being the spiritual children of a Wesleyan Ministry, had no such predilections. The Conference were most deeply touched with the awful situation of affairs; they trembled at the thought of a division, and its dreadful consequences; they fasted, and prayed for divine guidance. The deliberations terminated in a solemn recognition of the inviolable right of conscience of both parties; and the regulations were so constructed, as to allow an unrestricted choice of the place, minister, and people of sacramental communion or ministerial tuition*.

III. These Concessions involved the PERPETUATION OF WESLEYAN METHODISM. This was secured to the people, not only by the Chapel-Tenure, of which more will be said in the sequel; but in that important regulation, by which Candidates for Itinerancy could not be called out by the Conference, without the previous approbation of the Quarterly Meeting of the Society, where the Candidate resided. Suppose, then, the Societies were simultaneously resolved not to send another Candidate to Conference. Very soon, an Itinerant Preacher would not be living to till the ground. Methodism would be, what its first opponents predicated, a mere "*res unius ætatis*;" a thing of one generation.

* This subject has been so repeatedly and ably handled in the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazines, and in pamphlets; as to render its present discussion needless. Some judicious remarks, on this point, may be found in "The Apology for Methodism," by H. Sandwith, Esq.

Several important observations are deducible from the main argument. 1. The ministry, discipline, and doctrine are not subjected to the individual control of a preacher or a layman. 2. Individual or local considerations should submit to general interests. 3. A body-influence pervades the whole system; to whose impress every minister and layman should see it his duty and interest to yield. 4. The Conference, as the executive head of the Wesleyan Constitution, do not create any *new* power, as many suppose; but simply exercise conjointly and efficiently, what a Gospel Minister individually and scripturally assumes, by the sacred duties he is called to discharge. 5. The general dependence of the Conference on voluntary supplies, will dictate sound policy; while the individual independence of each Preacher, supplies nerve to overcome difficulties insuperable in an isolated Independency.

. In every commotion of civil or religious Society, certain terms are liberally and angrily reciprocated, between governors and governed; very little understood, and very often misapplied; such as, *faction, turbulence, insubordination, contumacy, tyranny, usurpation, despotism, &c.* The decisive and salutary enforcement of just laws may be designated tyranny by some Cataline in the State, or Diotrophes in the Church; and, *vice versâ*, the determinate resistance of a people, suffering under the head-strong passions of a tyrant; may, by that wretch, be deemed turbulence or rebellion. As these terms have found their way into the Wesleyan Controversies, it is proper they should be either expunged; or, if employed, should have a specific or legitimate application. The next proposition may perhaps furnish some help to their right use, so far as the Wesleyan system is concerned.

PROPOSITION VI.

THE PRESENT LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE WESLEYAN POLITY, IS AN ACCUMULATED RESULT OF THE EXPRESS OR TACIT ACQUIESCENCE OF THE SOCIETIES IN GENERAL.

“THE external order of the church may undergo such alterations as the ends of edification in different exigences may require, and prudence may direct. The only thing of real importance is, that nothing be admitted which can, in any way, subvert the fundamental maxims, or infringe the spiritual nature of the government. Now, as to the form of the church first instituted by Christ and his Apostles, let it be observed, that there were at that time, especially two objects which seemed equally to claim attention. The *one* was the conversion of the world to the Messiah; the *other*, was not only the preservation of the converts that should be made, but the securing of a continuance of the faith in their families. These *two*, though they concur to the ultimate end they are fitted to answer, the glory of God in the salvation of men, are very different in themselves, and require different instruments and means. For the first, there was a set of extraordinary ministers, their charge was universal and their functions itinerant*,” for the latter, a located and subordinate ministry was employed; greatly resembling the offices of Class-Leaders and Local Preachers, in the Wesleyan Connexion. “The question, so much agitated in regard to the original form

* Campbell's Ecclesiastical History, Ed. III. p. 49, 72 74.

of government, established by the Apostles in the Church, though not a trivial question, is by no means of that consequence which some warm disputants would affect to make of it. Not but that a certain external model of government must have been originally adopted for the more effectual preservation of the evangelical institution in its native purity, and for the careful transmission of it to after ages." It is highly probable that the people had a perfect reliance on the knowledge, zeal, and experience of their pastors, and would especially desire to know whom they, who were the fittest judges, and had the same object in view, would think proper to recommend over them, and also confide in them as to the main purposes of a christian Church. This proposition, however, is not designed to ascertain the precise form of Church government in the apostolical age, or to delineate the resemblance or difference between the Wesleyan Society and the Primitive Churches; but simply to prove, that whether the Wesleyan system be, in the main, *good* or *evil*, its structure is the product of successive concurrences on the part of the people.

The alluvium or sediment, deposited on the fore-shore of a wide river, by the influx of tides, will suitably illustrate the process by which evils in a church or commonwealth usually attain their magnitude and destructiveness. Corruption in Society is not the result of *one act*, committed at *one time*, by *one person*; but, as the infinite congeries of particles deposited on the shore form one mass or alluvium; so, the corruption in a church or state is the product of innumerable acts, by innumerable persons, and at innumerable times. Men, unaccustomed to close investigation, are too apt to confound magnitude with quality, expansiveness with secularity, and principles with circumstances; but this sort of confusion has inflicted incalculable injury upon Methodism. Any man, in the

present day, thinks himself at liberty to practice empiricism on the Wesleyan Body; Methodism is common game, and every church-mender has an infallible panacea, or catholicon, to apply to it; yet, every writer against Methodism has managed to keep out of sight, "Tha the present legislative structure of the Wesleyan Polity, is an accumulated result of the express or tacit acquiescence of the Societies."

It is needless to revert to the Wesleyan Polity, prior to 1797, as the negotiations of that year were retrospective and prospective. The Conference did not then, as despots always do in civil tumults, hold out promises of future compliances; giving a *LITTLE now*; and promising *MUCH, by and bye*. The Conference honestly declared, they could not, and would not, "go farther" in concessions. The Societies, in general, by medium of their delegates on that occasion, and who acted as plenipotentiaries, fully knew the mind of Conference on the points conceded and retained. Five thousand Members, not deeming the concessions sufficient, left the Connexion. The question now is, ought the continuance of the other Members, in the Connexion, thus re-modified, to be legitimately interpreted an acquiescence? Most assuredly; for, whether the acquiescence were a cordial assent of their judgment, or merely a relinquishment of their own will, to avoid a greater evil; the advantage was substantially on the side of compliance. Sometimes a tradesman purchases articles, the price and quality of which he does not wholly approve; but, as he cannot do without the article, he effects the purchase. Now, will his disapprobation of the article dissolve the moral obligation to pay the debt incurred? This case, which supposes the tradesman well knew what he was doing, is in perfect unison with the events of 1797. Could any man, not insane, imagine that the Conference which held,

with a firm grasp, the great principles of the Constitution, when the Connexion was convulsed to the centre; would; the next year, moot the question of co-legislation? Is not co-legislation, in fact, the nucleus of every Wesleyan Controversy? On the supposition that many Members did not fully coincide with the *new* system; still they felt they could not be happy without Methodism; and that, at any rate, they had good stuff for their money. The general serenity and increase of the Connexion, for many subsequent years, prove, more than all argumentations, that the acquiescence was as cordial and extensive as any earthly constitution could hope to enjoy.

*Does not the
concession
imply that
the system was
not universal*

The grand concession of 1797, however, consisted in the pledge, given by Conference, to submit "all future new rules" to the adoption or rejection of the Societies. The concession runs thus: "It is determined, that if at any time the Conference see it necessary to make any new rules for the Societies at large, and such rule should be objected to, at the first Quarterly Meeting in any given Circuit; and if the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the Preachers, be of opinion that the enforcing of such rule in that Circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that Circuit, it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of such Quarterly Meeting, before the second Conference. But, if the rule be confirmed by the second Conference, it shall be binding to the whole Connexion*."

Much unhandsome hypercriticism has been bestowed on the verbal structure of this concession, the purport of which is to insinuate that the Societies still remained inca-

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 376.

pable of nullifying any act of Conference; that the Conference played the cheat, and never intended to allow the use of what was professedly conceded; i. e. that three hundred ministers dependent, as to subsistence, on VOLUNTARY supplies, practised imposture on the Connexion!! Would not such an opinion, if currently imbibed, consign the whole posse of Itinerants to immediate poverty and merited disgrace? That the concession is valid, practical, and influential, will appear on the following considerations. 1. It is the duty of every Leader, Trustee, and Steward, to read the Minutes *every* year, within fourteen days from their arrival into the respective Circuits. 2. As every Trustee, Leader, and Steward have friends, official residents in the *same* Circuit, it is perfectly easy to consult them on any important Minute, *prior* to the September Quarterly Meeting; without violating either the spirit or letter of that rule of the Body, which discountenances "the holding of separate and irregular Meetings." 3. If, at the September Quarterly Meeting, the time for the deliberate discussion of the Minutes, should be found insufficient, no Superintendent would object to as many Adjournments, as may be really needful to ascertain the mind of the meeting on the *new* rule. 4. Every Member of the Quarterly Meeting, after having heard all that need be advanced on the question, should vote its acceptance or rejection, as his conscience shall dictate, without fear or favour. 5. If the number of Leaders, whose classes fall short of 20 Members, be set off against Leaders of more than one Class, so that the average number of Members to one Leader be 20*; the total number of Leaders in the Connexion, at the present time, will be 12260. Deduct 2260, as the probable proportion of female Leaders, who

* The Nine Circuits in Table I. average about Fourteen Members to each Leader.

do not legislatively “speak in the Church;” the net total will be 10,000 Leaders. If the number of Local Preachers and Trustees, who are not Leaders, as also the Stewards, be considered one-half more; the total number of available votes, on any *new* rule, would be 15,000 last September. 6. If this ratio be admissible, the actual proportion of votes, every year since 1797, will be as follows :

Years.	Votes.	Years.	Votes.
1797	4965	1813	9732
1798	5164	1814	10434
1799	5502	1815	10902
1800	5419	1816	11502
1801	5311	1817	11620
1802	5517	1818	11706
1803	5769	1819	11776
1804	5838	1820	11473
1805	6100	1821	12021
1806	6648	1822	12684
1807	7710	1823	13158
1808	6996	1824	13615
1809	7926	1825	13719
1810	8280	1826	13863
1811	9036	1827	14233
1812	9607	1828	15000

7. The total sum of individual votes, since 1797, will amount to upwards of three hundred thousand. Out of this prodigious number, not one case can be substantiated in which a voter has been obstructed by a Superintendent, in his expression of mind, or vote, on a *new* rule. 8. The Conference, by printing and publishing the Minutes, and sending them to every Circuit in the Connexion, do as much towards inviting scrutiny, as can be rationally

required of any governors, civil or religious. 9. Whether the extreme rarity of a Societies' interdict be attributable to a vapid apathy, or to an honourable confidence, the Conference could not interpret their silence in any other sense than an acquiescence. 10. If the arguments pursued in this proposition and the preceding, be valid, it is easy to define the terms, *faction, disturbance, contumacy, turbulence, tyranny, oppression, &c.* when employed in any disputes arising between preachers and people. If the dispute be concerning a thing **CONCEDED**, the people have a right to resist. If it be a point **RETAINED** at the negotiations of 1797, or a *new rule* **CONFIRMED** since 1797, the people ought to submit.

Any person who believes in the unity of the Body, and that the Conference is scripturally and constitutionally the executive of that body, for the **GOOD OF ALL**; cannot help allowing the legitimacy of that power which touches cases above the grasp of ordinary and local jurisdictions, for three obvious reasons. 1. A Member enters the Society, under a circumstantial, if not moral, certainty of being improved by it; but the Society is under no such impressions concerning him. He enters as a child, comparatively naked, dark, helpless, and unholy; the advantage, at the outset, is all on *his* side; they can do without him, but he cannot do without them, and this inequality characterises the notion of "equal claims," as pure nonsense. 2. Acquiescence in the *form* of the constitution, must also imply acquiescence in its just and efficient administration. 3. From the above arguments may be seen the legitimacy of that power, exerted conventionally and constitutionally by the Conference, which restrains or expels any turbulent individual, or local faction; which shall moot any question, previously settled by the general acquiescence of the Societies.

PROPOSITION VII.

IN ALL BODIES, CIVIL, MERCANTILE, OR RELIGIOUS;
SACRIFICES MUST BE MADE BY INDIVIDUALS, FOR
THE COMMON GOOD.

THIS proposition possesses the self-evidence of an axiom, and calls for no extended remark. Society cannot exist without sacrifice; especially the communion of God's people, in which the self-denying principle is ever deeply radicated. In political Societies, sacrifices are also made, whether the form of government be despotic, or popularly-constructed: but, with this distinction; in despotic countries, the happiness of the *many* is sacrificed to the caprice or cruelty of the *few*; but, in well-regulated kingdoms, the "natural rights" of a *few* are occasionally sacrificed for the good of *many*. The latter principle forms the basis of all acts of the British Parliament; the King is not exempted; for he can neither choose his own wife, nor change his own religion. It is ramified through all departments of the state. Suppose a case. A tradesman, having realized a handsome fortune, purchases or builds a delightful country-residence, on which he has bestowed no ordinary pains; his attachment to it daily strengthens; but, he must leave it; an Act of Parliament has been obtained for the cutting of a canal, or the constructing of a rail-way, which very lucklessly must pass through his property.

Remonstrance or entreaty are vain; neither can he enhance the price of surrender, beyond the marketable value of the contiguous land.

Here is a private sacrifice for the public good. Methodism requires sacrifices; to ascertain their nature and extent is reserved for future propositions. Suffice it now to observe, that the magnitude of the sacrifices is usually in the ratio of the importance of the object sought. God gave his only begotten Son, from a principle of infinite and everlasting love. The head of the Church was sacrificed for the good of all. Waving out of the question, the phrase, "passive obedience and non-resistance," so often libellously applied to the Wesleyan government; there is, or ought to be, a "love which becometh not itself unseemly, *seeketh not her own*; is not easily provoked, *thinketh no evil*;" and where this principle is deeply radicated in the breast, "the yoke is easy and the burden light," which Members are required to sustain in the Wesleyan Connexion. It is incumbent on the objector to disprove the proposition, or definitely to state what are the sacrifices a Methodist is called to make. Those most acquainted with the early history of Methodism, will recollect the sacrifices cheerfully made to establish the very system which seceders malign with an assiduity worthy of a better employ. And to these sacrifices may be ultimately traced the spiritual good the present race of Members have attained.

PROPOSITION VIII.

THE ACCUSTOMED PECUNIARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SOCIETIES, TOWARDS THE SUPPORT OF METHODISM, CANNOT BE LEGITIMATELY CONSIDERED ANY SACRIFICE WHATEVER.

IN the discussion of this subject, it is proposed, 1. *To give a brief historical sketch of the Funds.* 2. *To establish the Proposition.*

I. To give a brief historical sketch of the Funds.

THE YEARLY COLLECTION. This fund, the oldest in the Connexion, was instituted in 1749; the design of which was 1. To liquidate Chapel Debts; the whole debt in the Connexion, being that year £4000, a great sum in the infant state of the Society. 2. To release Local Preachers from their debts, and send them out to itinerate. 3. To supply poorer Circuits with the Gospel, especially the North-West of Ireland, and the North of Scotland, which otherwise could not be supplied. 4. To quell riotous mobs or persecutions, by removing all cases of disturbance, where justice was denied by the local magistracy, to the King's Bench.

Mr. Wesley suggested that *every* Member of our Society in England should set his shoulder to the work, contributing more or less, as God had prospered him. None to be excluded from giving something, be it a penny, a halfpenny,

or a farthing; and those who are able, to give shillings, crowns, or pounds."

Seven general Stewards for the Kingdom were appointed to manage the receipts and expenditures. In 1765, a large debt remained, after the whole fund was expended; this was the case two years afterwards. Private subscriptions were solicited at Christmas, and a collection was also made at Easter, the attention of the whole Societies being invited. Mr. Wesley engaged to state the case to the most substantial men in the Connexion; the effect of this was a total contribution of £5660, yet nearly £8000 debt remained throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland, on the various Chapels. Many had contributed largely in the hope that the debt would be entirely liquidated. In 1769, to encourage the Circuits to great exertion, the collections were applied to the Circuits where gathered, so long as any debt remained therein; and the surplus, if any, was paid to the Conference, for the benefit of the most necessitous Circuits. Twelve Circuits freed themselves from debt. The next year the debt accumulated; resolute measures were adopted to diminish the expenditure; and the conduct of Birmingham was recommended by the Conference as laudable and exemplary. Still, the resources were inadequate; a new method was tried to meet the heavy demands. Mr. Wesley observes, 1. "Let every Member in England, Scotland, and Ireland, give for one year, a penny a week. 2. Let the rich pay for the poor. 3. Let any that are minded contribute farther weekly." In the subsequent year, another scheme was tried to release the fund; instead of a subscription, a collection was made in every Chapel. In 1776, complaint was made that Ireland had sent only thirty-five shillings to the fund, that year; saying, "they would bear their own burdens, and England might do the best for itself." Mr. Wesley ac-

cepted the proposal, but took care to tell the Sister-Kingdom that “not only the *direct* expences of an efficient preacher should be discharged by Ireland, but they should also discharge the incidental or collateral expenses connected with sending preachers from England; that “he (Mr. W.) “would not sell his discipline for money.”

Very little was contributed to this fund in 1779, and the Superintendents were urged to exert themselves to promote the interests of the fund. Nothing of importance transpired for several years; in 1789, Mr. Wesley wrote a circular to all the Societies in England and Scotland, stating the chief circumstances connected with the progress of Methodism, and appealed to the increased wealth of the body, and to their sympathies for enlarged aid to the Preachers. The next year, some of the rules and regulations of this fund were revived and enforced. Some irregularity had crept in, as regards the appropriation of the funds. Less urgent and less valid claims having met with prior attention.

This irregularity led to a proper adjustment of the claims; the order of which was, 1. The demands of Scotland, so far as they are approved by the Conference, shall be disbursed. 2. The demands for Ireland. 3. Those of Wales. 4. Those of France. 5. The poor Circuits in England. 6. The demands of the remaining Circuits, according to the judgment of the Conference. This arrangement of expenditure differed much from its original purpose. From the commencement of this fund to Mr. Wesley's death in 1791, about £32,625 had been raised; of which £15,576 were expended in Chapels; £1730 in Law; and £15,319 for the support and extension of the ministry, unprovided for by ordinary resources. The deficiency of the next two years was made up out of the Book-Room. In 1794,

it was enacted that the deficiencies in the quarterage of Preachers, of Preachers' wives and children, with all demands for rent and furniture should be minuted down, at the District Meetings, and paid at the Conference in the *first* place. The next year a large deficiency remained; arising from great and unavoidable demands; the increase of Preachers and Circuits surpassed the resources: the Societies built Meeting-Houses, without rhyme or reason, and the consequent expences so much harassed the Connexion, as to require salutary and vigorous regulations. In 1797, it was resolved to publish annually, a very minute account of the disbursements of this fund. Large sums had been borrowed from the Preachers' Fund, of which further notice will be taken. The debt continuing to increase, the Conference issued a Circular to the Superintendents, too important and illustrative to be unnoticed. "You will, no doubt, clearly see, 1. The necessity of doing all in your power to persuade our people to provide for their Preachers in the several Circuits. 2. To inform them that in future we shall be under the disagreeable necessity to send them no more Preachers than they are able and willing to provide for, a very few Circuits excepted. 3. That on this account, the smaller places in each Circuit which can scarcely support the Preachers while they are with them, must have less preaching, if not be wholly given up the next Conference; and that a list of such places be taken at the next Midsummer Quarterly Meeting, in order that it may be sent to the next Conference. 4. That where any Circuit has been divided, so as to render more Preachers necessary than the people are able to support, and especially where they cannot provide a house for the family, such Circuits must be again united. 5. That the grand reason for the above regulations, is *hard necessity*. We cannot add

to our debt a thousand pounds every year, as we have done for several years past*."

The Conference acted the next year agreeably to the spirit of their Circular Letter; 1. They enacted "that no Preacher, marrying a widow with children, should have any assistance, either from the Public Funds or from the Circuits in which they laboured; for the children which their wives had by former husbands." 2. "They deemed it prudent not to call out any married Preachers to itinerate, especially as there was a sufficiency of single men to supply the Circuits." In 1799, a Treasurer, Clerk, and an Accountant were chosen to keep more succinct accounts of receipts and disbursements; at the September Quarterly Meeting, the Societies were again told of the embarrassments of the Connexion; and, in those Circuits where the work was not fully supported by the people, the Trustees of the Chapels, in those Circuits, were requested to grant as much as they could afford, to the general work, having previously discharged their own interest, repairs, and current expences; a general collection was also made, to which the Societies had been affectionately urged to contribute liberally. The debt at that time was £1900, and had been augmented by the great expences consequent on long or inconvenient removals of Preachers, to accommodate the wishes of the Circuits. In 1800, the Conference was again necessitated to assure the Societies that fewer Preachers should be sent to those Circuits, which brought heavy demands on the Connexion. A proposition was then made to the Societies to raise, on an average, one shilling from each Member throughout Great Britain and Ireland. The rich were respectfully reminded to aid the poor, so that the

* Minutes, vol. I. p. 397.

proposed average might be raised. In order to reduce the general expences, and to improve the financial concerns, it was resolved in 1801 to meet the ordinary deficiencies of the District, by the Yearly Collection, and extra Collections and Subscriptions, so as to confine the pecuniary supply and demand within the local boundary of each District. The debt at this time was £2000, notwithstanding £200 had been subscribed by the Preachers towards its liquidation. Several of the Preachers, who had a little property of their own, relinquished their wives' salaries; and great many of the Preachers, some of whom literally wanted bread, gave credit for their deficiencies, till the next Conference, to the amount of £1200. It was suggested that this debt of £2000 should be liquidated, by raising, if possible, sixpence from each Member on an average. But, many of the Societies were far more eager to get favourite Preachers, than to provide adequate means for their subsistence. The next year, that rule which enjoined on Districts the necessity of bearing their own burden, was confirmed. Dr. Coke was desired to draw out a plan of equalization; after which, no ordinary deficiencies could be presented to the Conference for payment.

A Financial Committee was formed in 1805, to whom was committed the proper management of the Yearly Collection; some former enactments, relating to prudent expenditure, were re-discussed and confirmed. An address to the Societies was again issued, stating rather minutely their pecuniary embarrassments. The Conference expressed strong reluctance to apply for an extraordinary subscription; but, intimated, in respectful language, their wish for the old Wesleyan rule of a penny per week and a shilling per quarter, to be more conscientiously regarded. The Societies, however, in some places, gave themselves but little concern about the support of the Preachers; for, even

after the existence of a Wesleyan Ministry in England for sixty-five years, many places had made no *regular* provision for the board of Preachers' families. Provision was made for the Preachers, *when at home*; but, *when from home*, many families were left without any allowance at all. The Conference, in 1807, ordered the Treasurer to retain annually, the sum of £100 in his hands, till the end of Conference, for the purpose of meeting any wants of peculiar emergency, which could not be foreseen, when the general accounts were presented, and which could not be postponed to another year. Several regulations were adopted in 1809; the purport of which was, 1. Not to allow more than £30 for furniture of any one house. 2. To revive and enforce the rules of 1794. 3. To appeal to that part of the Congregation, not Members, for pecuniary help. 4. The Chairmen were made responsible for exact schedules of the pecuniary averages of the Circuits, and to produce them at Conference. 5. To appoint Preachers, with large families, to those Circuits best able to provide for them; though in February, 1811, an extraordinary collection was made to diminish the heavy arrears; the Conference of 1812 found their circumstances still embarrassed, and every Superintendent was desired "to exert himself to the uttermost, in order to raise in his Circuit the sum of one shilling, on the average, for each Member, for the Yearly Collection." The allowance for furniture to new Preachers' houses, was reduced to twenty pounds; and no Circuit was to be divided, or an additional Preacher sent to any Circuit, in future, until a pledge was given that the Circuit would defray the consequent expences. The original rule of Mr. Wesley, regarding the Class-Contributions, was urged upon the Societies. The next year the Trustees of Chapels were solicited to render such assistance as they could afford; a public collection was made in February following; and no Circuit could be allowed

the labours of a *single* Preacher, " unless such Circuit engaged to support an additional *married* Preacher, instead of the single Preacher, at the end of four years at the latest." This salutary regulation, which ought to have been enacted twenty years earlier, allowed the Connexion to strengthen itself on the ground, already extended beyond its resources. The total deficiencies exceeded the resources in 1813, to the amount of five thousand pounds; chiefly owing to the multiplication of single Preachers in Circuits, which ought to have made provision for families. From 1816 to 1820 inclusive, the number of Preachers called out to travel, amounted to only sixty-four, whereas the number of Preachers' deaths, in the same period, was eighty-two; so that the Conference appeared determined to confine the expenditure within the resources. The JULY-COLLECTION was instituted in 1815, which will be noticed. Some minor regulations were passed in 1817 relative to the board of Preachers' families, so as to prevent imprudent claims on the Yearly Collection.

The Connexion made noble exertions in 1818, and the whole debt was liquidated; plans of retrenchment were also adopted, and the deficiencies, presented to Conference, shewed a further reduction of £2000. The Wesleyan Body now had a fair opportunity of rising and extending. The Conference kept a sharp look-out; determined to confine their expenditure within their resources. During the first eighteen years of this century, above one hundred thousand Members were added to the Connexion, besides filling up the vacancies of deaths, backslidings, and secessions. This *new* family required initiation into *financial* discipline, as well as moral culture; and this progressive increase of the Connexion, and perennial influx of fresh converts, rendered REPEATED addresses from the Conference expedient and essential.

In 1819, a Committee was appointed to fix a *maximum* of grants, out of the public funds, for ordinary deficiencies. In the annual fixing of the sum to every specific Circuit, due regard was paid to the capabilities and wants of the Circuits requiring help; but, *beyond that grant*, no Circuit was allowed to draw upon the Treasurer; but, if any Circuit, on a re-inspection of their accounts, found a *less* sum adequate, the Conference hoped the surplus would be sent to augment the disposeable income of the succeeding year. The prospect of surmounting every difficulty, became more cheering, though the pressure of the times and the suspension of an active commerce, involved thousands of Members in various and deep afflictions; and a strong political excitation in the disturbed Districts, had considerably augmented the evils. The salutary effects of the more recent rules were every year more visible; both Preachers and People were decidedly of opinion that their firm continuance would prevent the Connexion from being involved in debt, and would otherwise be productive of much good. To further the operations of the system, it was agreed that a financial District Meeting should be convened in the month of September every year, at which time the pecuniary distributions, &c. should be regulated. The Conference could not avoid the financial difficulties under which some Districts laboured, in consequence of regulations which circumstances and times rendered imperative, but the advantage of the new rules increased. The allowances to Circuits, for ordinary deficiencies, after 1821, were always paid by three instalments; the *first* at Christmas; the *second* in May; the *last* at the ensuing Conference; the Treasurer, of course, was instructed to make the proper remittances, in all cases where local resources were insufficient. The plan of paying, by instalments, was deemed as "one of great importance; as many Circuits would otherwise be deprived of the fair share of temporary accommodation."

The rules, however, enacted since 1808, were dictated by sound policy, sharpened by painful experience, and have succeeded in divesting the sittings of Conference of their former intricacy, and in placing the financial economy on a principle of flexibility and expansion adapted to all future emergencies.

The grand average contribution of each Member of the Connexion, since 1765, has been sevenpence halfpenny each year to this fund.

2. JULY COLLECTION. This fund was instituted in 1815, and was so designated, on account of the month of the year, when the appeal to the Congregations was usually made. Prior to this period, Home-Missionaries had been, for some years, employed in the uncultivated parts of Great Britain, where the population was in a great degree destitute of the ordinary means of religious instruction. As the *foreign* work began to enlarge rapidly, the term *mission*, as applied to the *home-work*, was set aside; and the July Collection was made to avoid future Extraordinary Collections. The design and necessity of this fund to aid destitute Circuits were made known to the Congregations by a printed address, read to them, when the collections were made. The *Yearly Collection* was privately made in the Classes; the *July Collection* was publicly made in the Chapels, and, in 1817, positive orders were issued to the Superintendents to pay the sums collected into the hands of the Treasurer, more punctually. In December, 1819, an extraordinary collection was made throughout the Connexion to aid this fund, (marked x in Table III.) since which time, the preventative regulations of Conference have confined the collections to their ordinary operation. The financial arrangements of the contingent fund have been so minutely detailed above, as to render farther remark unnecessary.

The average annual contribution of each Member of the Connexion to this Fund, is five pence each year.

3. BOOK-ROOM. The precise time and manner of forming this necessary appendage to Wesleyan Methodism, cannot now be exactly determined; as most or all of the books were of Mr. Wesley's authorship or compilation prior to 1760. In 1765, every Superintendent was cautioned "to give away the books prudently, to beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor. Mr. Wesley complained, in 1769, that the books were kept extremely improper, and one person was chosen to superintend their distribution; and, in 1774, the rule was confirmed. In 1779, the first Book-Steward was specially noted on the Minutes. The Preachers were, in 1782, strictly enjoined not to print any thing without Mr. Wesley's consent and correction, and "that all the profits should go into the common stock;" the notes on the Old Testament, by Mr. Wesley, were sold at threepence per number. The Preachers were again enjoined to print nothing without Mr. Wesley's consent. The Book-Steward was prohibited in 1792 from making any contracts in future, in respect to books, with any authors, or booksellers, or with any other person. In 1793, a Book-Committee was formed of the London Preachers, and seven other Preachers, resident in the Country, who were to be consulted, to advise each other, in respect to all publications of importance, previously to their being put to the press." About this period, several of the Societies imbibed the notion that the profits of the Book-Room were not suitably applied. The Conference, in the address of 1795, rebutted the charge. "Mr. Wesley laid up nothing of the profits arising from what he published; but, as it increased, laid it out in that way he judged best for carrying on the work, and supporting those Preachers, and their families, who were not supported by

the Circuits where they laboured ; yet he was obliged for many years, before his death, to take a *very* considerable part of what many of you so cheerfully contributed for the support of those Preachers, who had continued in your service as long as they were able, and the widows of such as had died in the work. It is true, many of you who knew, that the money you had subscribed for the above ends, was so applied, were grieved, and a few perhaps offended, as judging it unjust thus to lay it out. But when we told him so, he was used to answer, ‘ What can I do ? must the work stand still ? the men and their families cannot starve ? I have no money ; Here it is ; we must use it. It is for the Lord’s work.’ In such circumstances we could not refuse helping him, and in him the work of God, and also our distressed brethren who were engaged with us in that work ; only keeping an account from year to year of what was so advanced, which at his death was a considerable sum, besides the simple interest due upon it ; which as Stewards for you, and also for those, for whom you gave it, we *had no right* to give up ; especially as the demands upon the fund for superannuated or worn-out Preachers, and the widows of Preachers, are increasing every year ; and are very likely to do so more abundantly. Should any say, ‘ Now the case is altered ; all the profits of the books, which must amount to a very considerable sum yearly, are to be applied in defraying those expences. And this is enough for all, and to spare ! ’ As there is nothing more desired by us, than that all our deeds be brought to the light, especially when any satisfaction may thereby be afforded to the world, and more especially to our Societies, or any individuals therein, whose minds may have been hurt by misrepresentations of this kind, the present may be a favourable opportunity for so doing. We will therefore make a few observations upon the occasion, and state the case just as it is, and leave all men to pass an impartial

judgment on it. It is true, that by Will and Deed, Mr. Wesley did appoint, that after the payment of the just debts, the profits arising from the sale of books, tracts, &c. which he left behind him, should be expended in carrying on the Work of God. It is as true, that, at his death, he owed to the widow and children of his brother Charles Wesley sixteen hundred pounds. It is equally true, that an agreement was made between the executor of Mr. Charles Wesley and those who, by virtue of the deed, were obliged to become executors of the books, &c. of Mr. John Wesley; that, to secure the widow and children of the said Charles Wesley, and free them from all uneasiness, the above sixteen hundred pounds should be paid into the hands of Mr. John Collinson, as acting executor for them; which was done sometime about November, 1791, or as soon afterwards as the money could be raised. It is no less true, that this swallowed up all that was the stock of the Preachers' fund *at that time*, and several hundreds more. Now the whole of this was in the Book-Room. From whence it was natural to suppose, 1. That the *simple* interest, if not the principal, of the sundry sums advanced from year to year for *ten* years before the death of Mr. Wesley, as well as of what was advanced in the instance just mentioned, should have been *all* cleared up before a shilling of the profits arising from the sale of the books was applied in any other way. But strange as it may appear to many, the case is, 2, That instead of having been able to get one single shilling for interest out of the Book-Room since the death of Mr. Wesley, we have *every year* since that period sunk in debt, in carrying on the work, between four and five hundred pounds; and in 1791 between five and six hundred, over and above all we could draw out of the Book-Room for that end." This statement was deemed satisfactory and no more was said relatively to the transactions of the Book-Committee, with Mr. C. Wesley's exe-

cutors. The number of Preachers forming the Committee was this year, extended to twenty eight.

In the concessions of 1797, the Conference retained the management of the Book-Room on the ground of being *legally* entitled by the deed and codicil of Mr. Wesley ; the whole profits being appropriated in aid of the Yearly Collection, to meet the increasing difficulties of the Connexion. If a Preacher's manuscript had been rejected by the Book-Committee, he was at liberty to print it on his own private account, but not to offer it for Sale at the doors of Chapels, or to mention from the pulpit, its publication ; nor in any way to employ his *official* character, as a Preacher, to circulate books unauthorised by the Book-Committee. It was enacted the following year "that a Preacher received into full Connexion, in future, shall have the eight Volumes of Mr. Wesley's Sermons, (12mo Edition) given to him as a present from the Book-Room." In 1798, the Conference ordered their Book-Steward in future to read before them, an annual account of the receipts and disbursements. The stock was taken, valued and noted in a proper stock-book, and a Sub-Steward was appointed. The Hymn Book was revised and re-printed, under the care of Messrs. Coke, Story, Moore, and Clarke. The next year, Conference suggested the propriety of every Circuit that could afford it, to provide a Stationed Copy of Dr. Coke's Commentary, for the benefit of the Preachers ; and every Superintendent had authority to dispose of all the books in his Stock, in the best manner he could ; the Store-Rooms were enlarged this year. The too liberal manner in which cash had been advanced, by the Book-Steward to help the distressed Circuits, embarrassed the Book-Room concerns. The Steward owed in 1800 above a thousand pounds to the paper merchant ; a proposition was made to rescue the Book-Room from its pecuniary difficulties by raising such

sum to the Yearly Collection, as would leave a surplus to the Steward. In 1801 the Magazine underwent some alterations ; twenty-one preachers were chosen as inspectors of the matter to be inserted ; any three of whom could conjointly sanction or reject an article. The Societies were recommended to purchase those Books which were edited at the Book-Room, in preference to pirated editions ; especially as the net proceeds of the sales, were wholly applied to the carrying on of the work of God. The British Conference gave full liberty to the Irish Brethren, to set up a Book-Room for themselves ; and to make use of the produce of their Books for the carrying on of the work of God ; according to Mr. Wesley's will ; the whole Stock of Books, Tracts, &c. amounting to £350, then in Dublin, were *given* to the Irish Conference, accompanied by an affectionate permission to re-print for their own benefit, any books issued from the City-Road Press.

The next year the Preachers were forbidden to engage as booksellers for any books, except those which regularly came through the Book-Room ; neither should they employ the Book-Steward to sell books published by Preachers for their own profit. A few minor regulations were adopted in 1804 to simplify and balance the accounts. A Committee, *pro tempore*, was appointed in 1805, to manage every year the Book-concerns, during the sittings of Conference. The regulations of 1801 were confirmed. The Rev. Robert Lomas presented the next year a regular digest of the Book-concerns, which was respectfully acknowledged and adopted, and in 1808 the Conference voted thanks "for his very laborious, faithful, and successful services in the Book-Room." In 1812, the Book-Room issued, by order of Conference, a complete and correct edition of the "Minutes of the Conference," in five volumes octavo ; the edition consisted of two thousand copies, of which every

Preacher was expected to purchase at least one. The Book-Steward had liberty in 1815, to sell Benson's Commentary at half-price, to the Preachers; he was likewise ordered to present, elegantly bound, a copy of Mr. Wesley's Works, to the Rev. J. M. Bletsoe, M. A. for his valuable and *gratuitous* services as Head-Master of the school at Woodhouse-Grove. In 1816, the Book-Steward offered by Conference-permission, Benson's Commentary, to Local Preachers, at a deduction of 25 per cent. and the "*Youth's Instructor and Guardian*," a monthly periodical, was this year commenced. The Conference unwilling to make any new or special application to the Societies for pecuniary help, in those times of general pressure and distress, resolved to take upon themselves the whole debt, and rescue the Book-Room from its difficulties. To enable the Book-Steward to make the requisite advances to the distressed Circuits, it was peremptorily ordered, in 1821, that every Superintendent should punctually remit the net-proceeds of sales of books in his Circuit, at Christmas, Lady-day, and Midsummer-Day, and oftener if possible. The office of Editor to be considered *temporary*, and to be re-appointed every year, like all other Preachers, and never more than six years in succession. No Preacher to be appointed as Editor for more than three years in succession; if, at the time of his appointment to that office for the first year, he has been stationed as a regular Preacher in any of the London Circuits for the two preceding years. The same principle which limited the appointment of Editor, and of the Missionary Secretaries, to a given number of years, was also applied the year following, to the office of Book-Steward, which was to be considered temporary, the maximum being ten years. Dr Adam Clarke generously presented to the Book-Room his "*Memoirs of the Wesley Family*." The Rev. Henry Moore made a similar present in 1824 of his "*Life of Mr. Wesley*." The rule of 1821, respecting

the appointments to certain offices, including that of Editor,—which enacted that “no Preacher shall be appointed to those offices for more than three successive years; if, at the time of his appointment for the first year, he has been stationed as a regular Preacher in one of the London Circuits for the two preceding years,”—is hereby rescinded; so that *six years* shall in future be the only term of absolute limitation, in reference to the appointment of our Editor. In the year following, some minor arrangements were adopted; the Book-Committee examined the general state of the Book-Concerns; the servants’ salaries, and employments. The Tract-Society, which had for some time formed an appendage to the Book-Room, reported great success, and several rules, for its extension, were passed. Nothing of any importance transpired at the Book-Room until last year, when the Conference “approved of the steps taken by the Book-Committee respecting the publication of a complete and standard edition of the Works of the Rev, J. Wesley, and directed that such an edition should be forthwith printed.”

The average annual contribution of each Member to the Book-Room, has been about fourpence halfpenny*.

The *Yearly Collection*, the *July Collection*, and the profits of the *Book-Room*, form together a CONTINGENT FUND; the specific application of which was noticed when speaking of the *Yearly Collection*.

4. SCHOOLS. Of these there are two: one at Kingswood, near Bristol; the other, at Woodhouse-Grove, near

* As the ratio has been taken from the years filled up in Table III. the omission of any year does not affect the ratio.

Leeds. The former is almost coeval with the existence of Methodism ; and it was primarily designed for the reception of Preachers' sons, though the sons of private Members were admissible during the infancy of Methodism, on paying an adequate remuneration. As the Societies extended, and the families of the Preachers multiplied, the School was restricted entirely to the sons of the Preachers. Mr. Wesley evinced as much solicitude for the internal order and prosperity of this Institution, as for any department of the Wesleyan Economy ; he wished also to make the Societies sensible of its excellency, and ordered every Superintendent in 1746 to apprise the people of the nature of the School, and a collection was made for its benefit throughout England. In 1766, five Trustees were chosen, and the Bristol Preachers were desired to spend an hour every week with the children. The demands of the School increasing, a subscription was set on foot in Dublin, Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, and Liverpool, to liquidate the debt of 1767, and the parents were required, if able, to furnish suitable raiment for the children while at School. The School became too small to receive the children, and a proposition was made in 1782, to erect a kindred School in Yorkshire, and Mr. Wesley requested the Preachers to make suitable enquiries. The next year Mr. Wesley complained that his design in building the house at Kingswood was partially frustrated ; his rules had been broken, and he resolved forthwith that the School should " be ended or mended." It was enacted in 1785, that no children under nine years of age should be admitted, and Preachers' daughters should be allowed six pounds each, per annum. In 1792, a Committee of five were chosen to manage the Institution, and a few domestic rules were enjoined. In 1794, it was resolved that " if a Preacher cannot give a satisfactory reason why his son should not go to the School, he shall not be allowed the proper quota

received in such cases." No daughter allowed to receive any thing before she is nine years of age; she shall then have eight guineas a year for four years. In 1796, it was enacted that no Preacher should receive any thing for his child, when above the age of seventeen, and the disbursements of the fund were in future to be minutely detailed to the public. Children, prevented from entering the School, were allowed by a rule, passed in 1799, to have one pound per month, from the time they were eight years, until they were fourteen. The allowance to Preachers' daughters was a'so extended one year more. During Mr. Wesley's life, no vacations were permitted; but in 1803, the boys were allowed "a vacation of two months every two years, and their parents to be allowed one shilling a day, during the absence of the boys on their visits to them on that occasion." This privilege, after one year's trial, was considered by the Conference "highly detrimental to their morals and learning," and was therefore repealed. The repeal, however, must have been owing to imperfect statements being presented, as in 1811, the permission to visit their parents and friends was renewed; the expense to be borne by the parents. The funds of this Institution were depressed in 1804; as £600 were borrowed, and still a deficiency of £300 in the supply for the current year; the Societies were exhorted to liberality. The next year a rule was passed, requiring "four guineas to be paid annually by the parents of each boy at the School, towards his clothing, and that the postage of all letters to the boys, and all expences of their travelling to and from the School, be also defrayed by them."

An Address to the Societies was published in 1808, earnestly requesting their aid, not only by the public collection, but by private subscriptions in their respective Circuits. The money paid by the parents towards the

clothing of their boys at the School, not to be longer demanded. In 1808, a Committee of eight were appointed to look out for a suitable situation in Yorkshire, as near Leeds as conveniently may be, for the establishment of another School, as suggested by Mr. Wesley in 1782. Any boy discovering an extraordinary genius, was allowed to continue at the School longer than the usual period, provided that his parents paid such a sum towards his board and clothing, as the Committee deemed proper. Parents having sons not at Kingswood, though of the proper age, were authorised to receive, in future, the usual allowance for children from their Circuits, in addition to the allowance made in such cases from the Kingswood School.

The Conference of 1811, restricted the visits of children to their parents, to the month of September *only*. In this year the house and estate of Woodhouse-Grove, near Leeds, were purchased by the Conference, and designated by them "The Wesleyan Academy." The property was legally conveyed to twenty-three Trustees, on behalf of the Conference. A Committee was chosen to inspect the fitting-up and furnishing of the Academy. Every Preacher in the Connexion was requested to contribute one guinea (and more, if his circumstances permitted) towards the purchase. Application was also made to the principal friends for pecuniary help, and the Conference acknowledged in a respectful circular the handsome liberality of the Societies. No Preacher was allowed to have his son admitted into either of the Schools, unless his subscription amounted to five guineas, at least. A Committee for each School was also chosen. In 1813, the Preachers were desired to make private applications to such Members and Friends, as were likely to become annual subscribers, and the names of the subscribers to be published.

The *general* vacation at the School was rescinded, and

every Preacher was allowed to have his son at home for one month in the year, whenever most convenient to himself. The plan of classical education, originally drawn up by Mr. Wesley, for the use of Kingswood School, was revived and adopted in both the Schools.

The Conference finally determined the general vacation to take place in the last week in April, and the first three weeks in May. Some Circuits having voluntarily allowed their Preachers some pecuniary help for their children until the age of twenty years, the Superintendents were directed to explain to those Quarterly Meetings, who requested it, the reasons which induced the Conference to pass the resolution which permitted Preachers to receive that extended allowance. The Conference of 1816, regulated the admission of boys into the Schools, according to the seniority of their parents. The disbursements, &c. of this Institution were published after this year, in a separate report, for the inspection of the subscribers. In 1818, it was suggested that "the enlargement of the School-Libraries being deemed desirable, the Book-Steward was directed to transmit to the Library of each School, a copy of every book published in future at our Book-Room, on our own account; and our Preachers, who publish any work, are also requested to present a copy of it to each Library; such presentation being subjected, however, to the opinion of the Local Committees, as to their suitableness for the use of the Scholars. The Premises at Kingswood were at this time enlarged, to meet the increasing demands of the Preachers for admission; £600 were borrowed by the Treasurer to discharge the bills for enlargement, and every Superintendent was specially instructed to renew his applications to the Societies for pecuniary help.

In this year a most important arrangement was suggested, relative to the equalization of the Preachers'

children throughout the Connexion: though the measure did not affect the *interior* economy of the two Schools, it had a very influential collateral bearing on them. Some of the best and wisest Preachers in the Connexion had often found extreme difficulty in going to suitable Circuits, on account of the largeness of their families. The apportioning of allowances for children, on the Circuits in a fair and equitable manner, according to the number of the Societies, was conducive to the comfort of Preachers with large families, to the benefit of the Circuits, and to the improvement of the general finances; but it especially facilitated the Stationing-Committee during the sittings of Conference. The suggestion being generally approved by the Societies, was passed into a law, by the Conference of 1819. It is needless to transcribe, in minute detail, the provisions of that law; the guiding principle of equalization was, 1. To ascertain the number of Members in the Connexion. 2. The number of Preachers' children, entitled to allowance, whose parents laboured in those Societies. 3. To require a certain ratio or number of Members to provide the allowance to one child.

Years.	Members.	Children.	Members to One Child.
1819	191,435	1150	166
1820	185,879	1239	150
1821	193,654	1300	150
1822	205,758	1321	155
1823	213,031	1347	158
1824	219,578	1522	145
1825	220,115	1697	132
1826	224,201	1702	132
1827	231,228	1741	132
1828	248,113	1802	132*

* There is a slight variation from the number of Members expressed in Table II; this is owing to the Welch Circuits being under separate regulation.

To return to the state of the Schools; the School-Fund was, in 1820, above £200 in debt for the past year, and the claims upon the fund exceeded its resources by about £1000 per annum. The Preachers were ordered to pay for *each* boy, they had at School, *four guineas*: those Preachers who had no boy at School, but received the boy's allowance from the School-Fund, to pay *two guineas* for *each* boy claiming such allowance: every other Travelling Preacher, not coming under either of the foregoing provisions, to give *one guinea*. And these payments to be continued as long as the ordinary resources were inadequate to the expenditure. It was also suggested, in 1824, that a suitable interchange of Preachers in the Circuits at the time the Public Collections were made, might conduce to augment the resources. The next year it was resolved, that twenty-five pounds per annum, for each son of a Missionary, entered in the Schools, should be paid by the Missionary Treasurer to the School-Fund; and that the Missionaries should be subjected to the same regulations as the Home-Preachers.

The Circuits, requesting more Preachers, were reminded that additional expences were thereby eventually entailed on the School-Fund; and therefore such Circuits ought, in justice, to supply a correspondent increase of help to the Institution. In 1826, "The Circuit-Stewards, in several respectable Districts, recommended that the usual allowance of six guineas per annum, heretofore made from the Children's-Fund for those sons of Preachers who were educated at home, should also be made out of the same fund, for those boys who were educated at the Schools. The year following, a proposition was made to enlarge both the Schools, so as to admit twenty more boys in each School; the families of the Preachers having increased beyond the means of accommodation. Every Travelling Preacher was

required to raise one guinea, at the least, towards the expense of the enlargement; and the surplus, if any, should be applied to the liquidation of the old debt."

A few general remarks will appear in a future proposition.

The average annual contribution of each Member to this Institution, from 1765, to the present time, is about fourpence.*

5. AUXILIARY FUND. For many years this was designated the Preachers' Fund, but owing to the events of 1797, the Institution became divided; and the contributions of the Societies were kept apart from those of the Preachers. The fund originated in 1749, for the relief of aged Preachers, their widows, and families. Every Travelling Preacher was required to contribute ten shillings annually. Owing to the chasm in the minutes, from 1749 to 1765, no information concerning this, or any other fund, can be accurately obtained till the proceedings of the Connexion became published in 1765. Every Travelling Preacher was expected to contribute half-a-guinea annually. Every one when he was received as a Travelling Preacher paid one guinea; the fund was never to be reduced below £100; every Preacher's widow received, once for all, a sum not exceeding forty pounds; every child left by such a preacher, shall receive, once for all, a sum not usually exceeding ten pounds: but this could not be claimed by any child, whose mother had received the forty pounds;

* In the contributions to the Schools, the Preachers' subscriptions are also included, the latter are set off against the few donations and legacies occasionally presented to the Wesleyan Institutions, (the Missions excepted) and which would not, if included, alter the averages *one halfpenny* a year.

none were entitled to any thing from the fund, till he had subscribed two guineas ; nor any person, from the time he ceases, unless superannuated, to be a Travelling Preacher ; nor any who neglects paying his subscription for four years ; but whoever is excluded, should have the money returned, which he subscribed. In 1767 it was ordered that no one should derive any help to the fund until the stock amounted to £500 ; a preacher's widow was allowed to receive ten pounds a year, during her widowhood ; and no money, in future, was to be returned to an excluded Preacher ; and legacies bequeathed to the institution were to be deposited in the care of some confidential person. Complaint was made in 1774, that some of the Preachers neglected to send their contributions to the fund. No rule was passed until 1785, when it was agreed that any Preacher who had been a year on trial, might subscribe to the fund. In 1791 it was peremptorily enjoined that "no money that has been or shall be subscribed to that fund, shall be applied on any account to the discharge of contingencies, or to any purposes whatsoever, except those which the rules of the fund direct." A Committee of nine were chosen the next year, to whom the future management of the institution should be confided. In 1795 the Conference addressed a letter to the Societies, explanatory of Mr. Wesley's conduct in drawing from this fund different sums for the carrying on of the work of God ; which was explained when speaking of the Yearly Collection. During this year, the benefit of the late Act of Parliament, respecting charitable funds, was taken in behalf of this fund. In 1796 material alterations of the rules passed ; the purport of which is as follows :

1. Every Preacher who shall be admitted on trial, shall at the next, and every subsequent Conference, till his admission into full Connexion, contribute one guinea.
2. Every Preacher, when received into full Connexion, shall contribute two guineas, and every succeeding year, one

guinea 3. No Travelling Preacher shall be entitled to any benefit from this fund, till he has paid ten guineas towards the support of it: except as hereafter provided. But any Preacher in full connexion, shall be entitled to the privileges of the fund, on paying ten guineas.

4. All the money received towards the support of this fund, shall be lodged in the hands of four Stewards chosen by the Conference. These Stewards shall give sufficient security to the Committee chosen by the Conference; who shall see these rules executed. And this Committee shall keep exact accounts of all monies received and paid, and shall lay them before the Conference.

5. Every Preacher whom the Conference judge to be worn out, and who has not departed from the work, shall receive twelve pounds a year for life. And every Preacher who has laboured longer than twelve years without departing from the work, and is judged by the Conference to be worn out, shall receive one pound annually for life, for every year he has travelled above twelve, to the time he became superannuated. But this allowance shall not preclude the Conference from extending mercy to any distressed brother, whose case may be represented to them. They shall consider his situation and circumstances, and add to this *just demand*, what to them may appear needful to support him comfortably. It shall likewise be in the power of the Conference, to make suitable provision out of this fund for the children of deceased Preachers, and distressed widows, on any occasion which they shall judge necessary.

6. Every widow of a Travelling Preacher, shall receive twelve pounds a-year; and if her deceased husband travelled more than twelve years before he was worn out, she shall be allowed one pound annually, for every year her husband travelled above twelve, till the time he was superannuated. If a widow marry, she shall have but half her allowance during her second marriage. But, if her second husband die, she

shall again receive the whole as before, while she continues a widow. 7. If any travelling preacher be superannuated or become an invalid, before he has deposited ten guineas in the fund, he shall be allowed twelve pounds annually for life; on condition that he subscribe annually, one guinea, till the ten guineas be subscribed, or that he make up the ten guineas sooner. 8. If any married Travelling Preacher die before he has deposited ten guineas in the fund, his widow shall be allowed twelve pounds annually for life; on condition that she subscribe annually one guinea, till the ten guineas be subscribed, or that she makes up the ten guineas sooner. 9. No Preacher shall have any right to this fund till he be admitted into full Connexion. 10. The widow of a Preacher that has never been admitted into full Connexion, shall have no right to the privileges of this fund. 11. If any widow of a Preacher, as aforesaid, marry, her annuity shall be at her own disposal, and be paid to her quarterly, by the Superintendent of the Circuit in which she resides, and not otherwise. 12. No person shall be entitled to any benefit from this fund, who has voluntarily left the work, or who sets up for himself independently of the Methodist Conference and Connexion. 13. No Preacher that shall be excluded this Connexion for any crime or misdemeanor, shall have any benefit from this fund, except the money he shall have subscribed towards the support of it, which shall be returned to him. 14. No Travelling Preacher who neglects to pay his subscription for four years successively, except those engaged in Foreign Missions, shall have any benefit from this fund; and every Travelling Preacher who does not bring or send his subscription to the Conference every year, shall be fined five shillings. 15. This fund shall never be reduced to less than one thousand pounds. 16. If it shall happen, at any future period, that the fund cannot support the burden upon it,

then, in such case, the Committee, with the advice of the Travelling Preachers, shall advise the best method, and use the most prudent means; to raise the fund. 17. No part of this Fund shall be applied to any purposes, than those directed by these rules; and all monies that have been borrowed from it, shall be repaid with legal interest. 18. The head-master of Kingswood-School, for the time being and the Book-Steward for the time being, subscribing as above to the Fund, shall have all the privileges allowed by it. In 1799, an important regulation was adopted; the separating of the Preachers' contributions from those of the Societies: the former were added to the stock, and constituted the *legalized, or Preachers' Annuity Fund*; the latter formed the *Auxiliary or Merciful Fund*. The Preachers' Fund is distributed among the supernumerary and superannuated Preachers and widows, according to strict and impartial rules of justice. The Auxiliary Fund, is a fund of charity, raised by the voluntary contributions of the people; and applied only to the assistance of real objects of mercy among the supernumerary and superannuated Preachers and Preachers' widows, whose legalized claims were quite inadequate to their necessities. In 1801, the burdens on the legalized Preachers' Fund so increased, as to threaten its extinction in a few years, unless the Preachers' subscriptions were raised. In 1806, a Committee of eleven was appointed, "who shall annually determine the measure of relief that ought to be afforded to the respective claimants, in addition to their annuity from the Legal Fund; and shall also decide, according to circumstances, from what source the additional allowance should be derived." With respect to the Preachers' Fund, it was agreed, that an Address to the people, in favour of this excellent Institution, which was read to the Conference, and approved, shall be printed at full length; and that a proper extract of it shall also be printed, and transmitted

to all the Superintendents, in order that it may be used by them when they raise the next subscription. The Preachers were exhorted, by a circular letter, to make the necessary exertions in their several Circuits, in behalf of a Fund, so essential to the comfort of our superannuated brethren, and of the widows and families of those who were deceased. It became more and more manifest every year, that the legalized Fund could not support the Annuitants which were upon it, without the subscriptions of the people; and as the small sums which any superannuated Preacher, or the widows of such as were dead, had a right to from that Fund, were utterly insufficient for their support, without additional help from the Fund of Mercy, the expediency and necessity of this most excellent charity were stated to the Societies. Dr. Clarke drew up a plan for the improvement of this Fund, which was published in the Magazine of the next year. In 1811, the laws and regulations of the Legal and Merciful Funds were considered, revised, and amended; and in 1813, the laws of the *former* were printed for the benefit of the Methodist Preachers; the receipts and disbursements of the *latter* were to be published, in future, separately from the minutes, for the information of subscribers. In 1815, the provision for the children of deceased Preachers was specially recognised and regulated. Nothing of any importance has transpired since that period, except the repeated raising of the Preachers' subscriptions to meet the increasing demands upon the Funds.

The average annual contribution of each Member to this Institution, from 1767 to 1828, has been about two-pence halfpenny.

6. CHAPEL-FUND. The erection of Chapels was considerably aided by the Yearly Collection, in the infancy of Methodism. So early as 1749, the Chapel-debts

amounted to £4000. In 1765, the Society "was over-run in debt," and every Superintendent was expressly enjoined not to suffer more Chapels to be built than were "absolutely necessary." A person was deputed to travel throughout England to survey the Chapel-deeds, and to supply Trustees where wanted; the form of the Chapels, and the interior structure were also regulated. The debt in 1765, was above £11,383; Mr. Wesley says "We shall be utterly ruined, if we go on thus;" no other building shall be undertaken till two-thirds of the money be subscribed; and no allowances shall be made to any Chapel, begun after 1766, till the debt was reduced to £3000; every Superintendent was expressly desired to obtain the proper settlement of Chapels not "settled according to the plan;" three eminent Counsellors were consulted concerning the deeds and the indorsement of new Trustees; two years afterwards, it was suggested that all the deeds, relating to the Chapels, should be lodged in one place; above £2000 were contributed in 1769, towards Chapel-debts, and still about £6000 remained unliquidated; Mr. Wesley positively enjoined the next year that "an absolute stop be put to all building; no new houses be built, no addition or alteration made in any old one, unless the proposers can and will defray the whole expense, without lessening their yearly subscriptions." A proposition was also made, at that time, to invest all the Chapels in a general trust, consisting of persons chosen out of the whole nation. In 1771, Mr. Wesley recommended the Societies to subscribe for one year, something weekly to reduce the Chapel-debts. The Chapel-Deeds, whose Trustees were defective, were recommended to be indorsed according to the legal provision. To encourage the Societies to exert themselves in paying off their debts, it was agreed that only a fifth part should be sent to Conference, and the rest kept in the Circuit. Some one suggested to Mr. Wesley, in 1778, that some

Trustees may abuse their power after his death; his reply was highly characteristic of his confidence in a gracious Providence; "it seems," says he, "we need take no thought for the morrow, God will provide when need shall be." Four years afterwards, the Conference forbade any Members to collect for a Chapel, unless its projectors and managers would conform to the Conference-plan. The Trustees of Birstal Chapel, at this time refused to settle their building on the Wesleyan tenure. Mr. Wesley ordered that, if the Trustees persisted in the refusal, another Chapel should be built contiguous to theirs. In 1783, "the needless multiplying of preaching-houses was considered a great evil." No person was to be allowed to beg for any Chapel, except in the Circuit where it stood. Dr. Coke was appointed by Conference to visit the Societies throughout England, where the Chapels were not settled on the Conference-plan, and to effect this desirable object. This year, sixty-nine of the senior Preachers requested Mr. Wesley, in a written document, to which their names were affixed, that he would draw up a Deed which would give a legal specification of the phrase, "The Conference of the People called Methodists;" the mode of doing it was left entirely to Mr. Wesley's judgment and discretion. In 1786, the Conference resolutely confirmed their rule, which prohibited the collections for preaching-houses, not settled on the Conference-plan. The Conference-plan, upon which so many blunders and libels have been published, runs thus: "THIS INDENTURE made the day of between of in the County of on the one part, and on the other part, WITNESSETH, that in consideration of lawful money of Great Britain by the said to the said truly paid, before the sealing and delivery thereof, (the receipt whereof the said doth hereby acknowledge,) and for divers other considerations him thereunto

moving, the said hath granted, bargained, and sold; and by these presents doth bargain and sell unto the said, &c. their heirs and assigns for ever, all that lately erected house or tenement, with the yard thereunto adjoining, situate in aforesaid, now in the tenure or occupation of together with all the ways, drains, and privileges, to the said premises appertaining, and all the profits thereof, with all the right, title, and interest, in law and equity: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, the said house, yard, and other premises, to the said, their heirs and assigns for ever. Nevertheless, upon special trust and confidence, and to the intent that they, and the survivors of them, and the Trustees for the time being, do and thall permit John Wesley, of the City-Road, London, Clerk, and such other persons as he shall from time to time appoint, and at all times, during his natural life, and no other persons, to have and enjoy the free use and benefit of the said premises; that the said John Wesley, and such other persons as he appoints, may therein preach and expound God's holy word. And, after his decease, upon farther trust and confidence, and to the interest that the said, or the major part of them, or the survivors of them, and the major part of the Trustees of the said premises for the time being, shall, from time to time, and at all times for ever, permit such persons as shall be appointed at the Yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, as established by a Deed-Poll of the said John Wesley, under his hand and seal, bearing date the 28th of February, in the year 1784, and enrolled in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery, and no others, to have and to enjoy the said premises, for the purposes aforesaid: provided always, that the said persons preach no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's notes upon the New Testament, and four volumes of Sermons: and, upon further trust and confidence, that as often as any of these Trustees, or the Trustees for the time

being, as soon as conveniently may be, shall and may choose another Trustee or Trustees, in order to keep up the number of Trustees for ever. In witness whereof the said hath hereunto set his hand and seal, the day and year above-written." If the preaching-house is in debt, a clause may be inserted empowering the Trustees to mortgage the premises*. In the year 1789, reports were current that some of the Itinerant Preachers disapproved of the settling of Preaching-Houses or Chapels, on the Conference-plan; against this report one hundred and fifteen Preachers protested, and subscribed their names to the protest; among these names was the celebrated Mr. Kilham, who afterwards became conspicuous in the disputes of 1797.

The Conference did their utmost to prevent any collections being made for building or repairing Chapels, except in the Circuits where they are respectively built. A Committee of ten was chosen in 1790, to advise on Chapel-erections; every thing relative to the building or repairing of Chapels was to be referred to them; not a stone to be laid till the house (i. e. trust) is settled after the Methodist form, *verbatim*; no building to be undertaken till an estimate be made, and *two-thirds of the money subscribed*. At the Conference of 1791, four months after Mr. Wesley's decease, a copy of a letter, dated 1784, from him to the Conference was produced; in which he entreated them by the mercies of God, to let all things go on, exactly in the same manner as when he was with them, so far as circumstances would permit. The Minutes of 1794 throw some additional light on the Trust-powers, &c. "The Trustees, in conjunction with the Assistant-Preacher, (i. e. Superintendent)

* Minutes, 8vo. edition, 1812, vol. i. p. 210.

who shall have one vote only, shall choose their own Stewards, who shall receive and disburse all seat-rents, and such collections as shall be made for the purpose of paying interest for the money due upon the premises, or for reducing the principal: of all which monies so received or disbursed, the aforesaid Stewards shall keep proper accounts in books provided for that purpose; which books shall be open for the inspection of the Assistant, and audited in his presence once every year, or oftener, if convenient. Provided, always, that when the necessities of the work of God require it, the Trustees shall allow quarterly what may appear requisite for carrying on the work, so that it may not be cramped. Provided, that if the seat rents and collections fall short of what will be sufficient to discharge the rents, interest of money, and other necessary expences of the Chapels, the deficiency shall be made good out of some other revenue of the Society; and that books shall be provided, wherein shall be inserted all the accounts, both of the Trustees and Stewards of the respective Societies, which shall be open for the inspection of Trustees and others, and that the said accounts shall be annually audited in the presence of the Trustees. Provided also, that nothing in these resolutions shall be construed to extend or alter any of the powers contained in the Trust-Deeds." The next year, that salutary law, which discountenanced the building of Chapels, without the consent of Conference, was again confirmed. In 1796, the Conference reminded the Societies not to build any Chapel "but where it is absolutely necessary, and that two-thirds of the expense be subscribed, for if the Societies would build of their own accord, the Conference would not be answerable for consequences."

The conflicts of 1797 have already been mentioned; the Trustees of some Chapels had imbibed erroneous no-

tions of their trust; and at Bristol, Liverpool, Leeds, Macclesfield, and Chester, uneasiness was evinced, which led to letters and deputations being sent; which adjusted, with very few exceptions, the disputes in an amicable manner. The Trustees, however, of the Nottingham and Huddersfield Chapels, and of some others, violated the Trust-deed, by resisting the Preachers sent by Conference. A suit was entered, towards maintaining which, nearly £100 were subscribed by the Preachers, and a collection was made in nineteen Districts. In 1800, it was resolved,

1. "No Chapel taken from us *unjustly*, shall ever be purchased by us.
2. No Chapels to be built on the Tontine-plan, that is, when the person concerned in building them, design to make them their own property, and turn them to their own temporal advantage."

During the critical times of 1803, a very important resolution was adopted to guard the religious privileges of the Body. The formation of "A COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES," to whom was referred the management of all law-suits pertaining to the injuries the Chapels or the Preachers might sustain from wicked men. In 1805, the Minutes recommended "greater caution to be used as to multiplying Chapels, which not only load the Societies with heavy debts, greater than they can bear, but require an increase of Preachers to supply them, particularly on the Lord's days;" and, in the following year, the Preachers were forbidden to supply commendatory letters to persons raising private and unauthorised collections or subscriptions for Chapels, among our people. The Committee of Privileges were instructed by Conference to commence a suit at law, for the recovery of Brighthouse Chapel, which had been illegally wrested. To promote the erection of new Chapels, where they might be wanted, to assist those Chapels which were overburdened with debt, and to relieve the Preachers from the disagreeable necessity of going to collect money from Circuit to

Circuit, while their own proper work was unavoidably neglected; it was recommended in 1808, to form a Chapel-Fund in each District, to be managed similarly to any other fund in the Connexion; the suggestion, however, was not practically adopted till more than ten years afterwards. Preachers were forbidden, by Conference, to preach in any Chapel, not settled on the Conference-plan: and, it was at the same time recommended, that abstracts of the Trust-deeds of the Chapels should be entered into a book, so that the nature of the trust, the names of the Trustees, and the places where the Deeds were lodged, might, at any time, be known by the Superintendents. The Conference of 1813, earnestly entreated the friends who contemplated, in future, the erection of new Chapels, to enquire before any decisive step was taken, whether, by the building of such Chapels, an additional Travelling Preacher would not be necessary; and whether, in that case, they could support out of the funds of the Chapel, or of their own Circuit. In 1815, the Conference again most earnestly advised and exhorted the friends to use the utmost caution, with respect to the erection of new Chapels; to remember Mr. Wesley's advice, "Beware of building expensive Chapels;" and not "to engage in any such undertaking; in the present state of our affairs, without a moral certainty that the income from seat-rents, together with the subscriptions that may be raised in the Circuit to which the new Chapel belongs, will be such as to prevent future embarrassments, and meet all the additional expenses of every sort, without that help from other parts of the Connexion, which it is found now so very difficult to obtain."

The mode of collecting for Chapels had been hitherto inconvenient and unproductive; various suggestions and projects for meliorating the Chapel-finances had been transmitted to the Conference, and it was judged advisable

to hold *special Meetings* to draw up some improved and permanent plan of relieving distressed Chapels.

The repeated cautions and entreaties of the Conference having been, in various instances, disregarded, it was deemed necessary to the honour and security of the Connexion to appoint five brethren annually as a Chapel-Committee. To them were to be submitted all proposals for the erection, purchase, or enlargement of chapels; with clear and full explanations of the *necessity* alledged, of the *expense* contemplated, and of the *Subscriptions* and other local *income*, likely to be raised. The Superintendent was positively forbidden to sanction any undertaking without the consent of a majority of this Committee.

The *special Meetings*, above-mentioned, were held in 1818, at London and Leeds; at which various Preachers were present, and Trustees from London, Rochester, Canterbury, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sowerby-Bridge, Halifax, Wakefield, Colne, Huddersfield, Barnsley, Bramley, Derby, Rochdale, Todmorden, Bolton, York, Otley, Norwich, Carlisle, Market-Raisin, and other Circuits.

A *general Chapel-fund* was recommended to be raised.

1. By regular private subscriptions throughout the Connexion.
2. By a *public collection* in every Chapel.
3. *By legacies.*
4. By *annual subscriptions*, from the *Trust-funds* of every Chapel in the Connexion; the minimum to be one guinea; and more, if the circumstances of any Trust-estates were adequate.

This *general fund* to be managed by thirty gentlemen; *fifteen* Preachers and *fifteen* Laymen. No case could be sanctioned by them, unless it came before them as having received the *previous* approbation of the Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit, and shall be recommended either by the Annual District-Meeting;

or, at least, by three Superintendents in the neighbourhood, who shall certify their approbation in writing. Financial schedules were adopted in 1820, to preserve the system and accounts, more compact and intelligible. *Anniversary Sermons* in aid of embarrassed Chapels were also recommended.

Several minor regulations were adopted; all of which were subordinate to the great principle of prudent erection and local exertion.

As this fund is apportioned by the "Committee of Distribution," according to the necessities of the cases seeking help; it must be obvious that this *new*, consolidated system rendered imperative, the duty of Chapel-Trustees confining their local exertions within their just boundaries. Several cases of dishonourable encroachment transpired, and the Conference resolved to cut off those Chapel-Trusts from the general fund "who irregularly solicited contributions beyond the just boundaries."

A circular letter was addressed by the Conference of 1813 to every Superintendent, expressive of the deep regret felt, that so many Circuits should be so very deficient in their contributions to this Fund, and requiring greater exertions in those Circuits, which had hitherto been negligent. The *new* system, however, has continued to work well; many Chapels have derived efficient help, and the building of future Chapels is placed on a permanent and prudent principle. Some idea of the preference of the *new*, to the *old* system, may be formed by the following specimen of Travelling Preachers leaving their own Circuits to beg in other Circuits.

Years.	Chapels Relieved.	Circuits Contributing	Years	Chapels Relieved.	Circuits Contributing
1797	8	32	1808	73	157
1799	9	54	1809	89	155
1802	18	111	1810	0	0
1803	24	106	1811	98	166
1804	30	104	1814	120	510*
1805	32	123	1815	118	243
1806	47	125	1816	114	240
1807	54	129	1817	146	223

In many cases, these begging expeditions detained a Preacher from his Circuit the greater part of the year, and not unfrequently his necessary travelling expenses absorbed one-half of the contributions; and to this may be added the indescribable mortification he felt at finding, on his return, his own Circuit-affairs in a very deranged condition. Allowing only *one* month's absence for each Chapel relieved, and the expenses incurred ten pounds each; the above specimen presents a travelling expenditure of £9800, and an occupancy of 980 months; or, the unintermitted labours of ten preachers for nearly eight years.

While the *new* plan of a *general Fund* prevents the recurrence of so inefficient and unsystematic a mode of improving the Chapel-finance, as the above specimen presents; every year deepens the conviction as to the import-

* The Circuits contributing, quote a higher figure than the number of actual Circuits in Table II. This is explained by the fact of one Circuit being canvassed the *same* year, for *different* Chapels, by *different* Preachers, and at *different* months; so that each canvas or solicitation, brought with it an *additional* expense.

ance of this Institution. The following is the amount of subscriptions, collections, &c.

Years.	Amount Raised.			Chapels Subscribed.	Chapels Relieved.	Average Cont. of each Memb.
	£.	s.	d.			d.
1819	3910	9	10	560	130	$4\frac{2}{4}$
1820	3849	9	9	586	252	$4\frac{3}{4}$
1821	3990	1	7	595	268	$4\frac{3}{4}$
1822	4117	5	2	556	263	$4\frac{1}{2}$
1823	4060	6	0	564	266	$4\frac{1}{4}$
1824	4394	9	10	576	242	$4\frac{1}{2}$
1825	4570	17	10	552	223	$4\frac{3}{4}$
1826	4419	4	0	551	224	$4\frac{1}{2}$
1827	4180	6	8	543	232	4

Though many cases have occurred of imprudent and expensive undertakings, yet the number is far below the statement urged by many persons, as the above scale will show; when it is recollected there are nearly 3000 Chapels*, but many of which are very small.

The average ratio of Contribution cannot be accurately determined.

2. CLASS MONEY. This is derived from two sources: 1, The *weekly* contributions of Members at the time of meeting in their classes. 2. The *quarterly* contributions at the renewal of the Quarterly Ticket of Membership; sometimes, though improperly, called Ticket-Money. This appellation is adapted to convey a wrong impression, as though the quarterages contributed at the visitation of the

* Dr. Warren's Chronicles of Methodism.

Classes, were the purchase of a document which admitted Members to Love-Feasts, Sacraments, &c. The *weekly* contribution is intended to average *one penny* from each Member; and the *quarterages* to yield *one shilling* from each Member, throughout the Connexion; making a total annual amount of eight shillings and fourpence from each Member on an average.

The capital defect of the Wesleyan Polity, in its *financial* department, may be traced to the INVARIABLE deficiency of the Societies in their Class-ratios; and this deficiency has compelled the Conference to resort to pulpit-appeals for help, in some instances unfavourable to the work of God, and which has given the Conference-discussions an air of secularity and cupidity by no means justly merited. The *Class-Money* originated in the spontaneous offer of the Societies, but which has never yet been fulfilled to the amount proposed nearly sixty years ago, and the Conference have repeatedly assigned the Class-deficiency as the reason for making public appeals. In the years 1782, 1788, 1805, 1806, 1812, 1813, and 1820, the attention of the Societies was directed to this important branch of the revenue, in a manner which exhibited a strong wish in the mind of Conference to avoid public collections as much as possible. Financial embarrassments have a paralysing influence on the religious prosperity of the Connexion; and though the *financial* department of the Connexion is managed more systematically than formerly, the duty and interest of the Connexion demand a more special attention to this important subject.

On the supposition that the average is raised, the contribution of each Member will be eight shillings and fourpence per year.

8. LOVE-FEASTS. These highly interesting and edifying means of grace, referred to in Jude 12, and by St. Ignatius and others of the Fathers, are *peculiar* to Methodism in the modern age. As the contributions are applied to the relief of the poor, and not to the maintenance of a Wesleyan Ministry, its revenue cannot be properly included in the contributions stated in this proposition. If the number of persons, not Members, admitted by sufferance into the Love-Feasts, be set off against the number of Members absent, through afflictions and engagements; and that the contributions of each Member be supposed sixpence each year; a moderate computation, when it is considered that persons will give *then*, who do not give at other times; the amount raised in Great-Britain alone, from 1765 to 1828, according to Table II. will yield about *one hundred and fifty-two thousand pounds*, distributed among the poor of the Methodist Societies. The contributions to the MISSIONS, SUNDAY-SCHOOLS, TRACT-SOCIETY, BIBLE-SOCIETY, and other Philanthropic Institutions, have nothing to do, strictly speaking, with the proposition. The design of the proposition is to show, what the contributor advances to the maintenance of the Wesleyan Polity, and not to its extension, is in no legitimate sense, a sacrifice; that the benefits the contributor derives from the Wesleyan system, fairly leave him the *debtor*.

The contributions of a religious sect may be classed into three general divisions. 1. Those which bear directly upon the support of a ministry, in which the contributor is *personally* interested and improved. 2. Those which may be deemed the practical exhibition of christian graces and sympathies towards the needy brother in the church, and the destitute man out of the church. 3. Those which relate to the extension of general christianity, and which do not bear directly upon the contributor's advantage.

The *first* class only belongs to this proposition, and presents an aggregate total of about ten shillings annually, from each Member to the support of the public ministry.

If the expense of the erection, seat-rental, and incidental charges connected with our Chapels be considered the same amount, the whole demands upon each Member will then amount to an annual average of one pound sterling per year. This ratio, though assumed, will be found nearly one third more than the money actually raised.

It is intended II. *To establish the proposition.* To place this subject in its just light, it is needful to revert to a former argument. In the first proposition, it was shown that "if there were no teachers of christianity, there would be no christian community." What, then, is the state of a people without a christian community? To quote the nervous language of the Inspired Volume, they are "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful*." This melancholy portraiture of the Gentile world, even at the Augustan age of Roman literature, exhibits, as to its essential lineaments, the *present* condition of the nations that know not God; and, indeed, the aboriginal character of Great-Britain. All the great and glorious capabilities of the Gospel of Christ, to meliorate the *civil, intellectual, political, and religious* condition of the human species,

* Romans i. 29, 30, 31.

must be taken into the calculation; and, if the establishment and continuance of christian ordinances be *instrumentally* necessary to effect such a splendid and felicitous change, the pecuniary contributions which uphold those institutions, yield to the contributors a more lucrative result, than the most fortunate mercantile speculation in the world. The question must be viewed "in its full orb complete," and not applied to a Society previously improved by moral culture.

Hence, it is impossible to feel sufficient indignation at the conduct of any man, who, in the moments of irritation or mortified ambition, withdraws his support from the religious institutions of a christian community. He has unquestionably a right to transfer his aid, or to change his almoners, as he judges proper; but not to deprive the community of his quota of help. The withdrawalment is a *practical* preference of heathenism to christianity, of atheism to piety, of paganism to holiness, of idolatry to spirituality, of hell to heaven. The principle, if carried out, would speedily lead to the utter extinction of a pure system of things. Suppose, 1. The spiritual conflicts of a christian be considered as bearing on his future well-being, though St. Paul could "reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed." 2. His zeal and labours to mitigate human misery, and advance human happiness, to be amply repaid in "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." 3. His contributions to be fully remunerated by the dignified and pure elevation of his civil and intellectual condition, over those nations where christianity has not exerted any influence.

This proposition has nothing to do with the varied forms of a corrupted christianity, or jesuitical hierarchy; but

assumes the motive and conduct of the contributors and distributors to be pure and faithful; and wherever the ordinances of christianity are scripturally upheld, they exert a combined influence in promoting the civil condition of the people, and prove most irrefragably, that the contributions are no sacrifice whatever.

The sacred oracles, the unerring test and guidance of every question, recognizes no such theory as the contributions to a christian ministry, constituting any sacrifice; and all appeals to public benevolence, adapted to foster such a feeling, are gratuitous and impolitic. Duty, not impulse, ought to be the rule of contributing as well as the rule of acting; that duty will echo the sentiment of the Royal Psalmist, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies?" There are many other circumstances associated with the contributions of the Societies, entitled to extended remark; the bearing of which may be better understood in that proposition designed to illustrate 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

PROPOSITION IX.

THE CONFERENCE HAVE NEVER YET DEMANDED OF THE CONNEXION ANY SACRIFICE, WHICH CAN, IN THE LEAST DEGREE, DIMINISH THE SPIRITUAL AND INTELLECTUAL ADVANTAGES OF THE SOCIETIES.

THE great ends of a Church should be steadily kept in view. What is the primary design of a christian ministry? To save sinners; “to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified*.”

What are the great ends of a Church? To make its Members wiser, more holy, more useful, and more happy; and, if its ministers, in their conscience and judgment, conceive that the *voluntary* relinquishment of a small fraction of civil liberty, may, in any instance, promote the general good, agreeably to PROP. VII. and that such relinquishment does not directly or indirectly frustrate the spiritual ends of the Gospel; the ministers unquestionably have a right to expect such a concession on the part of the people. If this proposition be true, that ignorance or malignity must be deeply reprehensible, which institutes a

* Acts xxvi. 18.

forced and false analogy between the acts of the Wesleyan Conference and Papal Supremacy*.

An idiot may resemble Sir Isaac Newton in the white of the eye and the elbow; but who has ever substantiated any resemblance between Methodism and Popery? The *former* has acquired its present magnitude by the diffusion of moral light; the *latter* owed its ascendancy to withholding moral truth, though there were undoubtedly many other causes which tended to raise the Church of Rome to amazing greatness and authority. In a subsequent proposition will be shown the distinction between the *essential* and *circumstantial* elements of a Church as embodied in the system of Wesleyan Methodism, and how futile are the conceptions of those who institute analogy between papal power and the Wesleyan Conference. From men who have imbibed educational prejudices against Methodism, no flattering testimony can be expected in its favour; but that men, who acknowledge to have derived their first spiritual good from Methodism, and by whose hallowing influence and protection their moral character was formed and matured, should attempt to establish a similarity between Popery and Methodism, is among those anomalies in apostasy, which the day of judgment alone will fully explain. To minds recollecting the dependence of the Conference on the people for subsistence, the commands issued by the Conference are susceptible of an interpretation the very reverse of what an apostate would attribute to them. The notion of the Conference possessing interests and resources separate from the voluntary aid of the Societies is most

* The Author much regrets that the limits of these sheets will not allow him to contrast the two systems, by parallel columns; shewing in the *one*, the leading steps by which Papacy acquired such ascendancy; in the *other*, how the Wesleyan System, in its progressive expansion, has never imbibed any secular properties.

egregious; the Conference, as a body, must have the welfare of the people at heart; the system itself shutting out those clashings of interests, diversities of objects, struggles for ambition, inseparable from Societies dissimilarly constituted.

Is it to be supposed that while this dependence exists, the Conference would "lord it over God's heritage?" Does not the Conference exist only by its hold on public opinion? Will not such an attitude prevent any outrage on the feelings of the people? Would the Preachers hastily oppose the interests of the Societies? Ought not those, who have voluntarily attached themselves to a community, to conform to its standing laws, and to abstain from every attempt to disturb its order and tranquillity? Ought not men to deprecate every step that would ultimately lead to the demolition of the fabric they at first engaged to uphold? Is not the rescinding of fundamental rules, on their own responsibility, most reprehensible and unwarrantable? Is it not most ungracious for any man to be angry and litigious, because his opinions do not meet with all that cordial reception he calculated? Do not the Preachers need protection? Are not the Members sacredly bound to strengthen their hands, comfort their hearts, and aid their labours? In any disputable point, wherein is an equilibrium of sentiment, ought not the bias to turn in favor of the sacred ministry? Have not the Conference respected the right of private judgment in repeated cases? Have not they administered affectionate counsel and kind influence even towards those who had publicly maligned them? Is it not a most preposterous supposition that Conference would demand of any officer, excellent in conduct, character, doctrine, and discipline, sacrifices that would diminish either his piety or usefulness? Is it not highly improbable, if not impossible, that they, whose interests

are inseparably blended with those of the people, can so far forget the mutual dependence of the body, as to trample on the happiness of the Societies? Does not this dependence establish an identity of interests?

These interrogatories are needful to be understood and answered, before the proposition can be felt in its full force. A man must be very dull not to perceive that while the Conference is *dependent* on the people for supplies, every command *authoritatively* given, is a high compliment paid to the good sense of the Societies. The greater the requisition, the greater the honour. Conference-orders are the product of a highly spiritual and dignified friendship, subsisting on a large scale. Perhaps the highest compliment ever paid to any religious sect by its ministers, in any age or place of this world, is that prohibition which the Conference invariably issues against the holding of separate meetings; for, there is no medium between the highest dignity and the most absurd effrontery, in this singular part of the Wesleyan Economy.

In the management of this part of the proposition it is intended. I. *To quote the mind of Conference, as expressed in their minutes.* "Part of the Leaders meet together on Sunday evening, without any connexion with, or dependent on, the Assistant. We have no such custom in the three kingdoms. It is overturning our discipline from the foundation. Either let them act under the direction of the Assistant, or let them meet no more. It is true, they can contribute money for the poor; but we dare not sell our discipline for money." (1776)—"To prevent, as much as possible, the progress of strife and debate, and consequent divisions in our Connexion; no pamphlet or printed letter shall be circulated among us, without the author's name, and the carriage or postage paid." (1795)—"No man, nor num-

ber of men, in our Connexion, on any account or occasion, shall circulate letters, call meetings, do or attempt to do any thing *new*, till it has been first appointed by the Conference" (1796.)—"As the Leaders' Meeting is the proper meeting for the Society, and the quarterly Meeting for the Circuit, we think that other formal Meetings, in general, would be contrary to the Methodist Economy, and very prejudicial in their consequences: but, in order to be as tender as possible, consistently with what we believe to be essential to the welfare of our Societies, we allow, that other formal meetings may be held, if they first receive the approbation of the Superintendent, and the Leaders' or Quarterly Meeting; provided also, that the Superintendent, if he please, be present at every such Meeting."—The Quarterly Meeting, rejecting a new rule, shall not, by publications, public meetings, or otherwise, make that Rule a cause of contention, but shall strive, by every means, to preserve the peace of the Connexion." (1797)—"If the Superintendent of a circuit, or any of his colleagues, be obliged to withdraw from a Quarterly Meeting during its sittings, the Meeting will be thereby dissolved; and we will receive no letters nor information from such Meeting on any account. And, if any Superintendent or other Travelling Preacher, do willingly submit to any such requisition, so as to withdraw from any such meeting, before its conclusion, he shall, on proof, receive due censure at the ensuing Conference."

"In some Leaders' Meetings, votes have been taken in given instances, whether the fixed and established rules of Methodism, as printed in the General Minutes, should be executed or not? What shall be done to prevent this evil in future? All our rules are equally binding on both the Preachers and the People: and, therefore, every Superintendent, who permits a vote to be taken on the execution or

rejection of them, shall, on proof, at the ensuing Conference, be deprived of the office of Superintendent." 1806:

The Conference have uniformly acted in perfect accordance with the spirit of these regulations; but, all the acts of Conference, on this point, have been when those "separate Meetings" have mooted questions previously settled by the societies at large. To interpret the conduct of the Conference safely and justly, it is needful to pause and review the whole of the preceding propositions; as they have an important, an intimate, and conjoined bearing on the subject under hand. A superficial and prejudiced objector bolts into the middle of the question; and, regardless of all the intermediate steps by which the Conference arrives at the opinion on which they ground the prohibition, he raises a hue and cry; "his liberties are violated, his rights are trampled upon, passive obedience and non-resistance, and that the system of Wesleyan Methodism, possesses elements of tyranny, which only wait a favourable occasion to be exercised with relentless and uncontrollable sway." The spirit of the times is quite favourable to the nurturing of this feeling.

Those who believe, in the main, the preceding propositions; may be prepared to weigh the subsequent remarks, and perhaps to concede to them; but he who disbelieves them, had better close the business, and read no more; for the argument being grounded upon them, can yield no good to his understanding. The Conference never degraded the understandings of the Societies, by telling them they had no "civil or natural rights" to meet when and where they choose; but the Conference have repeatedly declared, that the voluntary relinquishment is favourable to the spiritual interests of Methodism, and that the prohibition is really essential to the maintenance of the discipline of the

body. This singular and important declaration is entitled to the most patient analysis.

II. *The numerical inequality of the Circuits would deprive the greater part of the Connexion of the advantages contemplated by unlimited discussion.* According to the minutes of 1828, there are 351 Circuits and 39 Districts in Great-Britain. In most instances, the District-town contains the largest Society in the District; though not always, as in the case of the Canterbury, Exeter, Birmingham, Shrewsbury, Lincoln, and Newcastle Districts. *Twenty-two* of the District-towns contain, on an average, 1933 Members each; viz. London North, First London West, Norwich, Portsmouth, Redruth, Bristol, Bath, Birmingham, Macclesfield, Liverpool, Manchester first, Halifax, Leeds, Sheffield, Derby, Nottingham, Hull, York, Whitby, Newcastle, Douglas, Bradford. The remaining *seventeen* District-towns contain, on an average, 571 Members; viz. Canterbury, Lynn, Oxford, Northampton, Guernsey, Devonport, Exeter, Swansea, Merthyr-Tydvile, Shrewsbury, Lincoln, Carlisle, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Lerwick, Carnarvon, Darlington. The general schedule laid down in Table I. presents a tolerably accurate portraiture, or sample, of all the Districts in Great-Britain. It is true, in the populous Districts, among the miners of Cornwall, the colliers of Staffordshire and Newcastle, and the weavers of Yorkshire, a rather different schedule might appear; but the difference is fully counter balanced by the sterile, and thinly-populated Districts of many parts of Britain. Let the *seventeen* less populous District-towns be substituted by other seventeen more populous Circuit-towns, whose average Members shall be 1913 each; viz. London South, London East, Second London West, Truro, Penzance, Dudley, Manchester third, Leeds West, Huddersfield, Sunderland, St. Austle, Louth, Liverpool South,

Wednesbury, Stockport, Bramley, Birstal. These latter *seventeen* Circuit-towns, added to the former *twenty-two* towns, constitute the largest thirty-nine Societies in the Wesleyan Connexion. To some of these Circuit-towns, very few country places and Members are adjoined, as at Hull, Birmingham, &c. other Circuits, however, diffuse their Members equally over the whole Circuit, as Dudley, Louth, Wednesbury, &c. In order to simplify the statements, and to allow the objector every possible advantage; let the whole *thirty-nine* towns, containing 75,045 Members, be supposed to contain its Members and Officers within the respective towns, and to have no contiguous country-interest attached to them: there will remain 312 Circuits, quoting an amount of 170,149 Members, whose officers, institutions, duties, interests, &c. are equally diffused over the whole range of ground, in the manner of the Barton, Driffield, Howden, Brigg, Patrington, Beverley, Snaith, Epworth and Gainsborough Circuits, as laid down in Table I. The conditions of the argument show that rather less than *one-third* of the Connexion is able, with convenience and promptitude, to meet for discussion, either personally or by proxy: and rather more than two-thirds of the Connexion are, on an average, *seven* miles distant from their Circuit-towns; and, of course, the "rights of discussion" if used, must be accompanied by its correspondent difficulties, making about 6500 Societies, which are about *seven* miles distant from their respective head-quarters or Circuit-towns. Though this estimate may not be numerically exact; yet it is, on the whole, sufficiently accurate to show the condition of the Societies, in relation to the question under discussion.

III. The "*holding of separate meetings*" would be *partially confined to the populous towns, to the exclusion of the general Societies; or, be attended by immense inconve-*

nience and expense. Were the expediency to be fairly made out, it has already been shown that facilities for discussion would be afforded to *seventy thousand* Members; but the remaining *one hundred and seventy thousand* are, on an average, seven miles distant from their Circuit-towns. Now, as theories are valuable only so far as their goodness is visible in *practical* application; it is incumbent on the MAN OF RIGHTS to show, in what way the uniform and equitable expression of public opinion can be obtained, without tampering with the RIGHTS OF MAN; without his passing by the privileges of the majority. Are the *seventy thousand* town-gentry to cater for the *one hundred and seventy thousand* country-Members? When great sticklers for "civil rights" have worked up themselves, "like ocean into tempest tost;" have hoisted a black flag that neither gives nor takes quarter; have ceased to repose honorable confidence in the piety, wisdom, and integrity of their spiritual rulers, and must have law for every punctilio; they cannot reasonably object to see their theory carried out to its ultimate results. Unquestionably the object to be obtained, ought to be *very good*, and *very great*, to call forth the simultaneous movement and attention of the Societies. Let such a case, then, be supposed to occur; and mark its accompaniments. The populous towns and country-circuits are desired, by circular letters, to repair to their respective arenas of debate; to discuss the eligibility of a proposed measure. The populous towns perhaps may readily muster a goodly number of disputants, especially while the novelty is great, and the zest is sharp; but how will it fare with the Country Circuits, which comprise two thirds of the Connexion? Here are *six thousand five hundred* Societies obliged to traverse *seven* miles to the scene of action, loaded to the muzzle with a "set speech," which perhaps cannot be let off till after repeated adjournments.

This is outrageously vexing, but what is to be done? Travel again and again, to be sure, till the business is done. Remember the old proverb "*vincit amor patriæ*," the love of country surmounts all difficulties. As the man of rights sets out on the principle that the proper authorities either cannot or will not do their duty, he is doubly obligated to discharge *his own*, in spite of wind and weather. This theory recognises but little accommodation, or confidence. "England," says he, "expects every man to do his duty." Very good; so does Methodism. If it be good and valid Methodism to permit indiscriminate discussion, by any men, at any time or place, it certainly behoves those *new lights* to accomplish their work in a workman-like manner; for, to whatever decisions the "separate meetings" may arrive, those decisions ought certainly to express the true sense of the Societies at large, before they can be proposed to the Conference, or adopted into the Connexion. Every man, not insane, must allow this. The interest, duties, and rights of a Methodist, living in a Country Circuit of three hundred Members, are as valid, sacred, and important, as those of a Member resident in a populous town of three thousand Members; and, if the proportion of pecuniary support form the rule of preference, the Members of populous towns would be found in the back ground of the question. But, it has been already shown, that the majority are so circumstantially placed, in reference to one another, that the chief purposes, for which "separate discussions" would be ordinarily wanted, could not be efficiently managed by them; of course there is no alternative between reposing the executive in its present administration, or letting the work remain undone altogether.

IV. *To establish the eligibility of "separate meetings," it must be shown that the number of officers is inadequate to the management of business.* No mechanist encumbers

his machinery with needless appendages; simplicity and necessity are his guiding principles. Look at the Connexion modelled after the practice of separate meetings upon a large scale. What a *bulbus excrescens*, or unwieldy appendage to the whole polity! The separate meetings must be adopted to a very considerable extent to answer any efficient purposes, or to influence the present legislature: Are the "separate meetings" to supercede the ordinary administrations, to co-legislate with them, or to be subordinate to them? One of the three conditions must take place. Try the question on the *first* principle; viz. that separate meetings shall displace the ordinary vestry-business. In what posture will this management of things place the Connexion? Will the *busy* men become *responsible* men, if matters do not turn out agreeably to calculation? or, will the "chief speaker," after being the great toe of the concern, foremost in every step, manage matters so adroitly as to leave his adherents "to pay the piper?" This has been the case more than once in reference to secessions from Methodism. If the "separate meetings" are to supercede the ordinary vestry-business, what pledge can be offered by them; since there is no official responsibilities associated with them? They are a mere rope of sand in any critical juncture. Recur to the broad ambiguous principles of "separate meetings;" they know no selection of character nor responsibility of person. Any Member, whatever may be his station or inadequacy, may go and vote, he is a man, and that is enough. Compare such an assemblage of irresponsible debaters with the accredited official vestry-men of the Connexion. Will any man be at a loss to know to whom to give the palm of adequacy? On a low computation there are, at this time, *fifteen thousand* men who hold official stations in the Connexion. If these *fifteen thousand* men discharge their duty, would separate meetings be then expedient? No! but, if the fifteen thousand will

not fulfil their duty, can the separate meetings make them? No! so that whether the vestry-men discharge their duty or not, the remedy against misrule must be derived from some other source than from separate meetings. Argue the case, *secondly*, on the supposition that the separate meetings shall not supercede ordinary usages, but merely act in unison with the vestry. Business will go on very pleasantly so long as their views, motives, principles, and designs mutually coincide; but, if the resolutions of the two boards essentially differ from each other; a very probable, if not certain case; what steps could the Conference adopt to satisfy both parties? It is too late to lament the existence of "separate meetings!" The business may be of such a definite and specific character as to shut out a middle path altogether. The Wesleyan Constitution is not like the British Constitution. The King may dissolve his Parliament; and, so by repeatedly protracting the debates, may finally adjust the question so as not to seriously offend many of his subjects. The Conference were thus critically placed about thirty six years ago in reference to the administration of christian ordinances. And though the most unfeeling buffoonery has been poured upon their conduct, the Conference, nevertheless, felt their situation to be painful, awful, and critical; they wept, fasted, and prayed; and the best of all was, God was with them, and counselled them. If the question be argued, *thirdly*, on the ground that all the deliberations of separate meetings may be modified or rejected at the ordinary tribunals; that the "civil rights" of discussion must be subordinated to the accredited and constituted authorities; this sets the question at rest so far as the original design of indiscriminate discussion was contemplated.

V. If "separate meetings" be reserved for emergent cases, and not applied to ordinary business; the unfre-

quency of those meetings is hazardous to the right management of critical cases. In the fulfilment of a difficult diplomacy with a foreign power, what kind of envoy would a government choose to send? One, certainly, of business-like habits: one whose political competency has "grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength." In the event, then, of any critical transactions between the Societies and the Conference; which would be more likely to conduct the case safely, the "separate meetings," or the general vestries of the Connexion? A striking specimen of the sagacity of "separate meetings" occurred in the negotiations of 1797, at that time "two Committees were formed respectively, by the Lay Delegates on the one hand, and Conference on the other, for the purpose of discussing and amicably settling several controverted points touching the welfare of the Methodist Societies. Their deliberations, which occupied several days, were finally crowned with a termination alike satisfactory to both parties. Now, we think it will go some way in removing any suspicion from the minds of our readers, as to the Preachers designing to take any unfair advantage of the Societies; to shew them, that the very proposition embraced by those two parts of the rule, so severely animadverted upon by in his first and second objections, was dictated in so many words by the Lay-Delegates themselves. The reader will perceive this by the following extract, which describes one of the day's proceedings. 'Resolved; That the Committee of this Meeting do confer with the Preachers' Committee on the following subjects, viz. 1. The answer of the Conference with respect to the Bristol case. 2. How far the Preachers will agree, that when the Conference shall make any new rule for the Societies at large, provided the Travelling Preachers find, at the first Quarterly Meeting, that the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the Preachers, are of opinion, that the enforcing of such rule

in that Circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that Circuit, it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of a Quarterly Meeting till after a second Conference.

3. How far the Conference will agree to submit any new rule that they wish to make for the Connection, to the sanction of any Meeting of Trustees, Stewards, &c. sent to places where the Conference shall be held in future.' Now viewing the proposal exhibited above, as offered by the *Delegates* for the consideration and adoption of Conference, and not artfully and originally framed by the latter *à priori*, to entrap our liberties, we ask wherein consists the justice either of the remark, which occurs in the first objection, that "this rule was drawn up under the direction of some of the most intelligent Preachers in the Conference, who must have been conscious that they had reserved the whole power in their own hands;" or of that, which afterwards appears in the 2d objection, that, 'here, again, a doubt has been expressed whether or not the latter part of this sentence "in conjunction with the Preachers" is not intended to deprive the Quarterly Meeting of any power.' The fact, that the very *terms* in which the former part of the seventh rule is couched, were framed by the guardians of the people's rights, is alone a triumphant refutation of these insinuations. We charitably hope, that had overlooked the preceding extract. It is material, however, to our argument, to put our readers in possession of a document, which so powerfully sustains the favourable interpretation of the proceedings of Conference advocated in these pages*." Every word of severity which the Anti-Methodists have levelled against the verbal structure of the seventh article above quoted, is either true or false. If true, this part of the principle is validated: if false, the

* Sandwith's Apology for Methodism; p. 83.

mischief re-acts upon themselves without any means of eluding its force.

VI. *On all questions involving personal character, the deliberations of separate Meetings, will be found utterly inadequate to complete their intention.* This is a most serious consideration: the true philosophy of which seems to be very imperfectly understood. Separate Meetings have been oft convened for the purpose of instituting rigid enquiry into an implicated character; which, after a war of words, generally expire like a South-Sea bubble; and their failure has been usually attributed to some countermining of the opposing party, and not to any inefficiency essentially inherent to the Meetings. The following illustration may elucidate the case in hand. Intelligence has been received by two or three individuals in a religious Society, which seriously implicate the moral character of their Minister. As the evidence of the man's guilt is strongly presumptive, it is deemed requisite to hold a separate meeting; of this meeting, six persons A, B, C, D, E, F, are the principal conductors. Many discussions and disclosures ensue; upon which are founded resolutions "expressive of their deep regret," and requesting the vestrymen to employ efficient means of redress. The impeached Minister demands 1. The charge. 2. The accusers. 3. The evidence. The case is finally traversed to the District Meeting; to attend which, the six persons above mentioned are summoned. A, the accuser, goes fully into the case, and appeals to B and C to corroborate his testimony. The Minister, whose character and family-subsistence depend on the issue of the trial, is "all eye and ear;" and exerts his utmost powers to vitiate the evidence. And who can blame him? "Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life;" and for his character too; in a situation so sacred, where character is every thing.

"Who steals my purse, steals trash. 'Twas mine,
'Tis his, and has been slave to thousands ;
But he who filches from me my good name
Enriches not himself, and makes me poor indeed."

B and C, during their cross-examination, materially differ from their former statements. Not calculating that matters would arrive at such a crisis, they soften down those parts of the evidence which are heavily criminating. The accuser, A, who in all probability is the best man of the half dozen, indignant at the vacillating of B and C, turns to D. D, whose sagacity scents mischief brooding, finds his memory defective, and nothing can be extracted from him but "*non mi ricordo.*" "The Court" now calls upon E and F to deliver their sentiments. E confirms all that A advanced ; and F strikes out a middle course. The court acts under these circumstances as all tribunals ought to act ; the "defendant is entitled to the benefit of a doubt" and a verdict of *not guilty* is recorded on the journals. A and E repair homewards, and in "pensive sadness inly mourn" at the improbity and cowardice of mankind. The affair does not rest here : A and E, who had fully calculated upon B, C, D, and F, as "honest men and true," now level their artillery at the traitorous four. Animosities thicken apace, and three or more of the half dozen leave the Connexion, slip their cables, run out to sea, and perhaps are wrecked on the rocks of dissipation and impiety. Difficulties, of course, would necessarily accompany the case in "a legitimate meeting." These are not denied ; and extraordinary courage and fidelity are necessary to carry a man through his charge against the character of a Minister. But, the point at issue is to show, that "separate meetings" fail to complete their intention. If the case, as shaped by the "separate" meeting, be carried through the "legitimate" meeting, unmutilated ; still, the entire is re-discussed ; and, consequently, the separate meeting has amounted to NOTHING. But what says the History of all such cases ?

The very men who assisted, *at a separate meeting*, in accumulating the subject to a ponderous and unweildy mass, have shaped and pared it down to a snug portable size, when examined *at the legitimate tribunal*. It affords no extenuation to say, that the *six persons*, above mentioned, were intimidated at the presence of the "august personages" in black attire. The redoubtable champions of a separate meeting ought certainly to shew "pith and nerve," and to go thoroughly on with their business. No instance has yet occurred where a separate meeting, though ostensibly commenced with a MOST DELICATE feeling for their minister, has effected any practical good; but, on the contrary, the most distressing recriminations at each other's cowardice, which have induced shyness, anger, heart-burnings; and a distance as odious, as broad, and as repulsive as Hindoo Caste. These are facts, and "facts are stubborn things." A and E above-mentioned, having "seen an end of all perfection," resolve in future to let delinquents go on in their delinquency, and comfort themselves that matters will ripen by and bye, and their sin will find them out; but this conclusion of A and E is highly reprehensible. They have a way open to them; a way which will be mentioned when speaking of *checks*.

VII. *The holding of separate meetings would ultimately dissociate the Methodism of populous towns from the Methodism of the Country at large.* None but he, who has well studied Methodism, will fully perceive the truth, and feel the force, of this part of the proposition. To frame a code of laws upon such a self-adjusting, flexible, and elastic principle, as shall adapt itself to the *little* or to the *great*; to the *wise* or to the *ignorant*; to the *minute* or to the *expansive*; and still to retain the "unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace," requires a specially divine influence, little short of a plenary inspiration. This

universal adaptation of the Wesleyan Polity to accomplish the great ends of a Church, either among a dense population, or in a sterile soil, where its Members are "few and far between," *by the same means*, must argue coincidences of thought, judgment, and feeling, unaccountable on any other principle than a gracious over-ruling Providence.

If the "separate meetings," then, studied the good of all, they must have done the same as Conference have hitherto done; the two administrations would have moved side by side, in perfect harmony; and, like the two opposite wheels of a chariot, would describe an uniform parallel line on the sand, whether the vehicle moved in right lines or curves. But, if the separate meetings had their own interests specially in view, the very subjects deliberated would have a necessary tendency to bisect, so to speak, the whole Connexion. In all populous towns there has ever been a powerful inclination to blend showy and brilliant appendages with christian ordinances; is it not then obvious that all those parts of the Wesleyan system, not exactly in keeping with the "approved style," would be rejected, by those who had the power of making their selection, as too old-fashioned and primitive? Is it not apparent that the power to select would be employed by them to the serious detriment of the Societies at large, like the large buyers picking up all the prime samples and leaving the small dealers to manage for themselves? Say the fifty largest Circuits are in habits of indiscriminate convocation and intercourse, and in what way could the Conference so adjust the rules of the Connexion as to meet the demands of this *new* insulated interest, and still retain the unity of the body? Would not this strange and huge fungus on the tree of Methodism perpetually retard the uniform growth and fertility of the Connexion? The "Deed of Declaration," which is the key-stone of the whole fabric, must either

annihilate the association, or the association would annihilate the "Deed of Declaration." The latter is impossible, owing to its legal character, and, as to the former, the progress of the Gospel, by the instrumentality of Methodism, would be to a great extent seriously retarded, so long as the conflict continued. METHODISM IS A CONNEXION, as described in PROP. IV. an interweaving or unity so peculiar, as to baffle all attempts at analogy with any other sect of Christendom; it set out on no model whatever, but followed the guidance of a gracious Providence.

Hitherto the argument has been pursued on the assumption of a *good* motive influencing, and a *legitimate* question occupying, the separate meetings demanded by the man of rights; and their unadaptation to advance the spiritual interests of the Wesleyan Polity, must, it is presumed, be conceded by a candid mind. But the whole tenor of political and ecclesiastical History shows, that the establishment of irresponsible debate, an *imperium in imperio*, is utterly incompatible with the existence of the cause ostensibly professed to be advanced. Separate meetings are directly subversive of any constitution; they directly tend to division; whether their promoters primarily designed it or not, is quite another thing. Under what circumstances, then, would separate meetings be justifiable? When the purity and perpetuation of the Church are endangered, though in relation to Methodism, the people are guardians of their own spiritual privileges; this has been already shown*, though some have strenuously maintained the contrary. Ought not brethren and ministers to act in unison? Have not men some special designs in attempts to mend matters of government? Are not separate meetings, which

* See pages 74 to 79.

could not embrace more than one third of the brethren, on the most unrestricted and extensive scale, acts of unwarrantable liberty with the majority of the body? Is not mutual confidence the ground of true liberty? Is not liberty often used as a cloak for licentiousness? Cannot all subjects, adapted to extend and consolidate the unity of the body, be efficiently managed by the legitimate tribunals? If the Conference did not peremptorily forbid the protracted discussions of new laws, and also interdict the re-debating of old laws, previously adjusted; is it not obvious, that the tranquillity of the body would be at the disposal of every demagogue? No law exists to prevent fair discussion; but are stormy contentions congenial to the Gospel? Is there not apostolical authority for sacrificing civil and natural rights*? The Conference calculated on the existence of christian forbearance, on the surrender of rights, abstractedly considered indisputable, to avoid a greater evil; and the man, who calculates on any other order of things, go where he may, knows nothing of human society.

There is, however, another sacrifice demanded of the Societies, by the Wesleyan Conference, extraordinary in its requirements; which, in all probability, originated the charge of a resemblance subsisting between Methodism and Papacy: viz. *The prohibition of epistolary correspondence between the Members of different Circuits, on questions of Methodist legislation.* The severest vituperations have been levelled against the Wesleyan Conference in consequence of this "*non imprimatur*," or censorship; animadversions which the Conference could not discretely repel; but which the Societies ought to have

* 1 Cor. vi. 1.—viii. 13.

repelled long since. The *onus* or obligation to defend the measure, unquestionably lay upon the great mass of the Societies who had so long submitted to the interdict. Even men of respectable intelligence, forgetting all the collateral circumstances, connected with the prohibition, have imagined it to embody all the essentials of the damnable Popish doctrine that "ignorance is the mother of devotion;" that the non-intercourse bill of Conference is a flagrant outrage on the liberties of the Societies, which by the restriction are "treated as children and fools." Of the natural RIGHT to correspond, as well as to discuss, no man doubts for a moment; but of its EXPEDIENCY there are not only doubts, but many serious objections, as regard the spread of the Gospel by the instrumentality of Methodism. Some of these objections are presented to the reader's serious consideration, and are far from being all that might be urged; the limits of the work, and the multiplicity of the subjects, preventing amplified remark.

OBJECTION I. *Epistolary correspondence, however extensive and unrestricted, must necessarily convey defective information, on questions of legislation and character.* Who are to correspond? Any Members indiscriminately, or only some officially? This point must be previously settled; yet its settlement will not be found very easy. Fix the question on the ground of "natural rights," and all selection of character is totally set aside. Any, and every raw youth, in his teens, may forthwith correspond: yes, correspond to be sure, and look as large, in his own estimation, as the Secretary of State for the Foreign department; and, until he gets thoroughly surfeited, may spend half his earnings in postages. "But this," says an objector, "is ridiculous!" Very true, but who makes it so? As "the liberal and popular" scale must not be tampered with, who dare lay an embargo on the juveniles? "Due

regard," it is replied, "will be paid to character and station:" but, if the juveniles do not choose to pay "due regard" to the selection, what is to be done with them? "Exclude them, if very troublesome." No; that is an outrage upon civil rights; for, if the Preachers have no right to deprive the people of any power or right, by what authority can one part of the people deprive another part of the people of any right? The correspondents must be either selected or unrestricted: if unrestricted, all the salutary purposes contemplated by unfettered communication, will be vitiated by the conflicting evidence so heterogeneously amassed together. And this state of things admits of no remedy; for the unqualified scribblers, who have the "*cacoethes scribendi*," or itch for scribbling, will unquestionably out-number the judicious and deliberate correspondents. If, on the other hand, the correspondents be selected, of which every person must perceive the propriety; several items require to be adjusted: 1. The persons chosen. 2. By whom chosen. 3. Their functions defined. 4. In what way is the received intelligence to be employed? 5. From what resources are the expenses to be defrayed? 6. Is the correspondence to be perennial or occasional, perpetual or intermitting? These are not captious enquiries, but questions seriously involving the welfare of the Societies; and which the man of rights is obligated to answer satisfactorily. 1. The persons chosen. Is every Circuit to be furnished with its proper correspondent, or are some Circuits too little to be benefitted and too contemptible to be consulted? As exclusion cannot comport with this "liberal" order of things, *every* Circuit, of course, ought to have at least one correspondent. Then, 2. by *whom are the correspondents to be chosen?* By the vestry-officers, or by the Members at large? This also is of importance, for the nature of their functions will be materially qualified by the source whence the functions are de-

rived. If the correspondents be amenable to the vestry, the primary end of their office will be neutralised, viz. that of obtaining and employing information apart from the ordinary administration. If the correspondents be not amenable to the vestry, will or can the regular officers admit such communications into their debates, so as to ground thereon any resolutions? Admitting, however, that the choosers and the chosen be all nicely adjusted; a much greater difficulty interposes as to the proper functions to be discharged. Are there no rules to be deemed permanent and fundamental? Or, are the very stamina of the system to be re-discussed, as often as a knot of demagogues may think proper? Let it be remembered, "the liberal and unconfined" scale, prohibits selection of subjects as well as of character. Every man may do what is right in his own eyes, for unfettered communication hinders none. Amidst this incessant and restless locomotion of laws, can the fabric of personal piety and extended christianity be matured? Impossible. These church-menders, after treading to weariness, the quagmire of an unsettled constitution, will be glad to seek solid footing in a system whereon the mind may repose, and rest may be enjoyed. Their *new* constitution having imbibed a permanent order or form, will be defended by them with as much tenacity as the *old* constitution had aforesaid been defended by those whom they once severely vituperated. Society, civil or religious, must have a palpable permanent form of existence, not infallible or immutable, but embodying essential lineaments without which society could not consist. The propriety of imposing suitable restrictions, both as to the *persons* and *subjects* of epistolary correspondence must eventually force its way; the expediency would be daily more necessitous; till at last its necessity would assume the shape of express and positive law: yet even restricted permission would not be found to serve all the salutary

purposes laid down by many theorists, so far as Wesleyan Methodism is concerned. The unity of the body demands universality of information, before the projects of any club of correspondents could be safely adopted. The *scheme* may appear plausible and simple; but who does not perceive it a hazardous experiment to apply a new scheme over a range of Societies, embracing nearly three hundred thousand Members, prior to an efficient communication with the Societies? The inequality and expence militating against separate meetings above-mentioned, will also frustrate any practical good contemplated by unlimited correspondence. It is immaterial what may be the subject, the difficulties will press on every side as the atmosphere around. On the lowest computation nearly *one thousand pounds* would be expended on *each* law, by the Societies, in carrying on such epistolary correspondence as would furnish the required information. No Society could exist under such a taxation, and yet such taxation must be imposed, or the Societies would be either governed or annoyed by a clan of irresponsible scribblers. The information obtained from such a source must be necessarily and capitally defective, and must render its adoption into the Wesleyan Societies extremely inexpedient and embarrassing.

II. *The judgments or sentiments of the numerous Societies, expressed apart from each other, must collectively form the most accurate opinion upon any question submitted to general ordeal.* Is not this principle daily acted upon, even in commercial transactions, when the various Candidates for a contract deliver in estimates apart from each other? In what other mode could a natural spontaneous judgment of the Connexion be ascertained on a measure, otherwise than by a *separate* report of the Quarterly Meetings being sent to Conference? Is not the principle strikingly illustrated in our Courts of Judicature?

Are not all the unexamined witnesses frequently obliged to keep out of Court while the Counsel are examining other deponents? Why are such restrictions and exclusions permitted? To further the ends of justice; to elicit truth; to prevent the suborning of evidence. In what way would a man, involved in a serious dilemma, collect the opinion of the wise? by being closeted with his friends singly, and so collect unbiassed, and unprejudiced sentiments. Ought not each circuit to repose confidence in the *general* discernment of the whole body? The language of the Conference is dictated in very respectful terms: recollect the events of that era when the mind of the Conference was made known to the Societies. The most inflammatory publications had been issued; and, had not the loyalty of the Connexion been repeatedly tried and acknowledged, the legal character of the "Deed of Declaration" would have most assuredly been endangered. Not a word was expressed about prohibiting discussion, or correspondence, for the sake of obtaining information; the article simply says "The Quarterly Meetings shall not make that rule a *cause of contention*, but shall strive by every means to preserve the peace of the Connexion." Ought not every man to preserve the unity of the body in the bond of peace? Are not four or five litigious men capable of producing an unfavourable impression on the minds of many hundred persons, towards a design in itself valuable and salutary? First impressions are usually strong; are readily formed; and often without due regard to their truth or error. Almost all popular ferments are as ambiguously originated, as intensely excited. So the case was at Ephesus, when "some cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together*."

* Acts xix. 32.

It is in the nature of fallen humanity to suspect every body ; to ascribe evil properties to acts concealed from outward ken. Suspicion is the universal characteristic of heathenism in every age, station and clime*. Christianity, however, "thinketh no evil," "hopeth all things and believeth all things." Pride, mistrust, and curiosity† are the chief ingredients of that mind that must be knowing matters which, after all, are merely circumstantial and subordinate. Though patient and calm attention are necessary to comprehend the bearings and influences of the rules of the Wesleyan Connexion on the religious habits and happiness of the Societies, yet there is no intricate casuistry or mysticism attached to them, that renders indiscriminate and unrestricted correspondence needful. It is next to impossible for three hundred and fifty Circuits

* Voltaire commences his "Histoire de Charles xii" with these remarkable words: "L'incrédulité est le fondement de toute la Sagesse;" unbelief is the basis of all wisdom. How diametrically and awfully opposed to the genius of the Gospel!

† "The dexterity with which young Papirius concealed a secret from his affectionate mother has been often admired. His father, a Roman Senator, brought his son one day to the Senate, where they were deliberating on very important affairs. On his return, his mother asked him what was going on in the Senate. Young Papirius refused to divulge, saying that he was forbidden to mention it. This denial increased the woman's curiosity; she used the most earnest entreaties. Her son, being hard pressed, to satisfy her curiosity, fabricated a story. 'They have been discussing,' said he, 'whether it would be better for the Roman State, to allow two wives to one husband, or two husbands to one wife.' The Mother distressed at this intelligence, soon made it known to the Roman ladies. The next morning they assembled in great crowds around the Senate-house, shouting and screaming; declaring with stentorian voices that 'it would be better to allow two husbands to one wife, and that the Senators ought not to discuss such a question without previously consulting the ladies.' The Senators could not understand all this ferment; Papirius removed their anxiety by relating the way in which he eluded his mother's curiosity. They admired his prudence, and elected him a Senator, but forbid youths to enter the Senate in future."

Rocueil Choisi, par Vanostrecht, Ed. 8. p. 64.

comprising fifteen thousand officers to form an inaccurate conception of rules submitted to their inspection.

III. *The existence of the numerous sectaries, must necessarily counteract any baneful influence, of which the prohibition might be otherwise susceptible.* Commercial monopolies are hurtful, but a religious monopoly is ruinous to religious liberty; wherever the public are their own depositaries, no class of men can possibly usurp that sway over the public, which shall seriously affect their spiritual privileges, without a most awful and culpable apathy on the part of the public. In this section of the argument, there are *three* parties to be considered; *first*, the Conference prohibiting the indiscriminate correspondence of the Societies: *secondly*, the Societies thus prohibited: *thirdly*, the religious public under no such restrictions by their respective pastors. The prohibition, be it remembered, has been issued under a distinct recognition of those British privileges that permit any man to set up for himself. There is no moral or political necessity for any man to submit; the Conference conceive the prohibition to be expedient; they must be aware they are not the sole depositaries of spiritual light, or the arbiters of human destinies; the Societies have those collateral sources of information over which the Conference never can have any controul. "The schoolmaster is abroad in the world." The liberty of the press, the existence of numerous sects, the abounding of religious institutions, and a host of other circumstances conjoin to render those enactments of the Conference, affecting civil rights, perfectly harmless.

IV. *The same negotiations of 1797, which discountenanced "separate meetings and inflammatory publications," also conceded to the Societies the perpetuation of Methodism.* Mention was made in Prop. V. p. 71, of the

points CONCEDED and RETAINED, to which the reader is again referred. Compare, then, the points conceded with the prohibitions now under discussion; and to what conclusion will they conduct the examiner? Either, 1, That the prohibitions are honorably reposed on the good sense and affection of the Societies; or, 2, The prohibitions exhibit a master-piece of stupidity and hypocrisy, to which perhaps neither ancient nor modern history can furnish any parallel. Perhaps these great sticklers about civil rights forget that the Preachers are subjected to the same embargo; the rules which prohibit publications of any kind by the Preachers, are unrepealed, though not enforced; but would be undoubtedly enforced whenever the Conference shall see just occasion. "No Preacher shall print or reprint any thing, for the time to come, till it is corrected by Mr. Wesley," (Minutes, 1782). "No books are to be published without Mr. Wesley's sanction: and those which are approved of by him, shall be printed at his press in London, and sold by his bookkeeper" 1789. "As the Preachers are eminently *one body*, nothing should be done by any individual, which would be prejudicial to the whole, or to any part thereof. Therefore, no Preacher *shall publish any thing* but what is given to the Conference, and printed at our own press, &c." "Several of the Preachers, whose writings have been highly approved of, agreed to the above regulations, merely to *restrain improper persons from publishing*; the peace and honor of the Connexion, outweighing with them every other consideration," 1796. These quotations are sufficient to show that the Conference have ever maintained such a wholesome control, as shall prevent the publications of those books that would disorganize the Societies, or discredit the Connexion.

V. *Correspondence with other Circuits is not essential*

to the right understanding of Methodism. The documents available to a just conception of Methodism are so ample and so correct, as to render correspondence needless. The Committees of all the Wesleyan Institutions* are formed partly of Laymen, and partly of Ministers; and though some have objected to the Committees being so numerically chosen, as to secure, in any critical juncture, a vote in favor of the ministry; this circumstance is fairly and fully disposed of by PROPOSITION III. The Annual Reports, if incorrect, might be easily detected by the lay part of the Committee, and under all circumstances render correspondence of no practical utility whatever.

In reviewing the whole subject many important deductions may be drawn. 1. No sacrifice consistent with truth and justice, the rights of all parties, the maintenance of genuine Methodism, ought to be considered too great to be made by either preachers or people. 2. Forbearance with fidelity, gentleness with courage, wisdom with patience ought to characterise the administrators of the whole discipline. 3. Whatever extraordinary interferences may be required, they ought, as little as possible, to displace the ordinary execution of discipline. 4. The Conference have expressed a willingness to receive any information that may conduce to the general good; whether from individuals, or from local authorities. 5. The cordial acquiescence of the Societies in Mr. Wesley's autocracy, contributed more than any thing else, to the establishment of the great principles of the Wesleyan Constitution; which, for moral efficiency, perhaps stands unrivalled since the Apostolic age. 6. How clear the conception, enlarged the knowledge, pure the motive, and sound the

* The Legalised Fund excepted.

principle, ought that man to possess, who innovates on a system of tried worth and power. 7. Any measure of obvious utility must at once commend itself to the esteem of the Societies generally, and its proposer would not fail to witness its immediate and general adoption. 8. Perhaps in no denomination can be found the five great principles of a christian church more illustriously and practically manifested ; purity, knowledge, consolidation, expansibility, and energy. 9. In any case in which the interests of a Circuit individually, clash with the general interests of the body, the general welfare ought to bear the sway. (PROP. VII.) 10. Nothing will more contribute to preserve the tranquillity of the Societies than an ardent desire to experience the full power of its hallowing doctrines ; to apply them to the practice of the life ; and to live under solemn views of eternity. 11. It is a most easy thing to persuade people they are badly governed, since few persons seem aware that good government is the conjoint result of public virtue, long experience, and deep acquaintance with human nature. 12. The Preachers must be corrupt and bad men, before they could feel any inclination to establish and extend a corrupt hierarchy ; and not then, until a great part of " the people love to have it so." 13. The itinerancy of the Wesleyan Preachers prevents their connection with any individual Society, and making plans of innovation, which otherwise might be strongly advocated. 14. A firm uncompromising discipline is the grand bond of security, and contributory to the well-being of a Church. 15. Where there is controul, there must be interference ; where there is government there must be authority ; and where there is authority, there must be obedience. 16. Religious faction, like political faction, merges every other feeling ; and, whoever may be the nucleus of that faction, will find adherents determined to support him. 17. No man ever seceded from a christian community, through matters of trivial or minor consideration,

without a previous alienation of heart from that community ; the act is otherwise impossible ; reason denies it ; the noble disposition of the Christian character forbids it ; the example of the wisest and best of men discountenances it. 18. Methodism presents that soundness of doctrine, vigour of discipline, purity of ministry, zeal of the people, and facility for usefulness, which must prove a special over-ruling Providence subordinating the talents of Mr. Wesley, and the events of his times, to the gradual unfolding of a system which perhaps existed only in the Divine Mind. 19. The union of the Preachers among themselves, of the Members among themselves, and of the Preachers with the Societies, can only be preserved by a single eye ; aiming at the glory of God, and the salvation of men ; since love gave birth to Methodism, love has led it onward, and love will complete the whole. 20. Methodism was not the product of any preconceived plan, framed by a handful of men in closeted debate ; but one of those remarkable visitations of a special Providence, by which the Almighty does at times awaken the world from a fatal lethargy. 21. The common sense of the Societies, in general, would see and feel any grievance, if really important and extensive ; and, of course, would present their expression of opinion to the Conference, and prompt redress would be obtained.

PROPOSITION X.

TO DETERMINE ACCURATELY THE SPECIES OF CHECKS AGAINST PASTORAL MISRULE, PROPER TO BE EMPLOYED BY THE SOCIETIES; A JUST PERCEPTION OF THE CONFERENCE-CHARACTER IS PREVIOUSLY NECESSARY.

ON this subject, as on many others connected with Methodism, the most egregious errors have been committed, by some who stand forth as the "GUARDIANS" of public morals. Due regard must be had to the sources of information, the temper of mind, the patience of investigation, in forming a true estimate of the Conference-character. The charge urged by many against Conference, of apostasy from their piety as christians, from their zeal as ministers, is too grave to be treated with the unfeeling triumph and sarcasm, characteristic of many recent publications. A wise man never reproaches; a foolish man does reproach*; a youth may pelt ice with stones, but it is ice still, though shivered; if you want water, warm the ice. The capital aim of the enemies of Methodism has been to prove that ever since the great Founder of the Body has been gathered to his fathers, the acts of the Conference have been little else than a series of misrule and cupidity. In contravention to such a charge, we are prepared to show that many of the enactments of Conference, since 1791,

* Psalm xxxix. 8.

possess as much moral purity and power, as distinguished any period of Mr. Wesley's autocracy over the Societies. The proposition has nothing to do with any particular Preacher, no more than with any particular private Member, but with the Conference in their collective character.

I. *The regulations of the Conference, relative to Sabbath Schools, evince an anxious solicitude to transmit pure christianity, and unimpaired Methodism to future ages.* On the subject of Sabbath Schools, a few preliminary remarks may be serviceable: It is impossible to calculate all the benefits likely to result to civil and religious Society by the sacred and scriptural character imparted to the Wesleyan Sunday-Schools, by the recent regulations of Conference. Its excellence meets the eye and amends the heart. It is of the highest moment that the seeds of a moral renovation, deposited in the heart of a Methodist Sunday-Scholar, should germinate and fructify in all richness and luxuriance. One good effect resulting from Sunday-Schools, seldom adverted to, consists in the abatement of the hostile and litigious spirit of youth, extremely illiterate*. In populous towns, almost every street has had its clan of depredators, its congress of juvenile delinquents, among whom has existed a mature system of villany.

There is an evil flowing from an ignorance of God, and of a well ordered Society, which Sunday Schools appear eminently adapted to remove. A suspicious, repulsive selfishness, which fortifies itself on all sides by an inaccessible spirit, both "hateful and hating:" a spirit which holds no connexion with Society, only for a lawless self-appro-

* "Ingenuas didicisse, fideliter artes,
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros."

priation; exhibiting, in its march, the direst aggressions on the properties and securities of the enlightened and humane. This is the spirit, the unknown Captain Rock, of the Sister-Kingdom, which has hitherto baffled the wisdom of British legislature. What the Senator, with the "insurrection-act" in one hand, and the sword in the other, cannot achieve, is reserved for the christian teacher to accomplish, with no law, but the law of love, and with no weapon but the force of eternal verities. It is the same spirit of selfishness, which lays at the root of Hindoo-caste, giving to men of the same tribes, locality, colour, and clime, as broad and repulsive distance from each other, as if each man were tenant of a different planet of the solar system. The adaptation of Sunday Schools to overcome this curse of Society is both great and conspicuous. Early religious instruction possesses two principles to which its present extension and ultimate ascendancy may be attributed; principles, which perhaps cannot be found in any other form of christian benevolence. 1. *The peculiar position in which the heathen parent is placed.* The proposal of the Missionary to educate "the untaught Indian brood," suspends the parent between his fixed aversion to christianity and the clear interests of his offspring. This suspension of the heathen parent usually issues in the surrender of his children to the Missionary's tutorship. The parent compromises his former aversions, in the hope, that while his child is reaping benefits important to his future manhood, he is too young to be influenced by this *new* religion and worship. In this, the parent is mistaken. The Missionary-Pioneer is furnished with a handle to his axe; and he goes forth, clearing his way for the more sublime and saving manifestation of christian verities,

II. *The heart of a youth affords the most favorable soil in the world in which christianity could vegetate.* The

cautious mistrustful duplicity of the confirmed idolater, the most formidable of all obstacles to evangelization, has not enthroned itself on the heart of a child, and closed up the path to a correct formation and progressive maturity of christian character. The reciprocal fitness of christianity to the infant mind, and of the infant mind to christianity, has been gloriously displayed in the large aggregate of good effected in the foreign Sabbath-Schools in connexion with the Wesleyan body.

Many important regulations have been recently adopted into the Schools connected with the home-department, highly conducive to the re-animation of zeal, in those specially devoted to the work of Sabbath School instruction. These regulations have been passed by the Conference, under a conviction that there is a decay of zeal among Sunday-School Teachers, and that this decay has been general; though, on minute enquiry, it will be found that this declension applies more to the religious world at large, than the zeal of its actual labourers to be materially diminished.

In every department of christian labour, whether of preaching the Gospel, of visiting the Sick, or of conveying Sabbath-School knowledge, there is an almost ceaseless tendency to be weary in well-doing; a tendency, like the centrifugal or gravitating force of planetary bodies, urging escape from the orb of duty. This tendency to decay, if closely analysed, will resolve itself into general and special causes. By general causes are meant those tendencies to abandon a good work, which are common to all plans of moral benevolence; such as the misconstruction of our motives, the failure of success, the want of co-operation, ungrateful returns, the subsiding of novelty, the power of unbelief, the mortifying abortion of high expectations and

deliberate plans, the perplexities of opposite and conflicting counsel. When some, or all of these causes, exert a combined influence on a mind already harrassed by increasing worldly care, or by some powerful spiritual conflict, no wonder the labourer abandons a task to which he once believed God had called him; but which his morbid mind now imagines he has neither warmth of heart; clearness of head, nor strength of arm to accomplish. Such desertions are common to every sect, and to every institution; and, when found to occur at such a crisis, do not always argue any declension of personal piety. By *special* causes of decline are meant those tendencies to weariness peculiar to that distinct department of christian labour; causes which exist there, and *there only*. 1. The Wesleyan Sabbath-Schools have lost much of their original sanctity. It is not insinuated that the motive of a Teacher is less pure and divine; or his object less sacred or religious, than what characterised Mr. Raikes, and his coadjutors*: but events have unintentionally transpired to diminish the original sanctity or sacred appropriation of Sabbath School duties. Strange as it may appear, the fact is mainly attributable to the formation and rapid increase of National, Lancasterian, and other elementary Charity Schools, blending themselves with Sabbath Institutions; the reason of which is obviously founded on a well known axiom, that when a concern *spiritual* becomes blended with a concern *temporal*; the case is extremely rare that the spirituality of the one gives a sacredness to the temporality of the other; but almost always, a concern temporal

* Mr. Raikes was not the projector of Sunday-Schools; Mr. Webb, of Stroud, a Member of the Methodist Society, was the first Sunday-School Teacher; he opened his own house for that purpose, and from him Mr. Raikes obtained the suggestion.

“*Hos versiculos feci; tulit alter honores*.” Virgil.

imparts a secularity to that portion designed to be kept pure and spiritual. Compare the present state of Sabbath Schools with their origin. The primitive workmen expended their talents on a large mass of most illiterate children, for whom there was no intellectual and moral provision whatever. The result was visible, and was claimed by those workmen as the product of their own exclusive labour. A sabbath-consecration invested the whole, which nothing week-day or secular had yet touched. The posture of things is now widely different. A sort of partnership or co-agency subsists between the week-day Teacher, and the Sabbath Teacher; and, in those public Charity Schools where singing and prayer form a component part of the every-day employ; the resemblance is brought so near to the Sunday School system, as to confound the mind of a child on the divine command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." It is not recommended to discontinue the pious week day exercises of these elementary Charity Schools; by no means; but the Sabbath School employ ought to take proportionately higher ground; to invest that holy day with a sacred solemnity that shall impress the juvenile heart, that the Sabbath is peculiarly the day of the Lord their God. These truths will explain and justify those resolutions of Conference which discountenance teaching the art of writing on the Sabbath day. Amidst this amalgamation of things, this close resemblance of the week-day to the sabbath employment, the Sunday-School Teacher in vain attempts to trace the result of his own labour; and, when this is lost, one of the greatest excitements to persevering zeal is destroyed. Set two children to work at a job that pleases them. How sedulously each child keeps his doings apart from those of the other; how thriftily he deposits every atom to his stock, and hopes to accunulate, by small fractions, a mass of work which shall outvie his little competitor. The same

feeling follows the child to his manhood. Every man loves to expatiate on the product of his own labour. 2. Another special cause of decline may be found in that vile propensity of fallen humanity to underrate a blessing in the exact ratio of the necessity and universality of its bestowment; while on things gaudy, splendid, and useless, the most extravagant eulogium is often lavished. Who justly values a pure air so conducive to health? Who properly estimates the bread that allays hunger, or the water that assuages thirst? These blessings, being daily and universal, are almost as daily and universally forgotten. In spite of all theories, the labours of a Sunday School Teacher are currently estimated far below their just value. An eloquent man delivers an impressive speech on a question which may have cost him a few days' labour; he and his speech are emblazoned on the heraldry of fame, while the patient plodding Teacher plods on without a breath of praise that can stir an aspen leaf. 3. The long protracted space elapsing between the period of imparting instruction and the manifestation of fruit, contributes no little to the decay of zeal. A valuable substratum of rich ore is deposited by the assiduity of a Sunday School Teacher, in the deepest recesses of the juvenile intellect; but which may not enrich the possessor till after many days. A Sunday School Teacher's labour is not much unlike civil engineering; such as the construction of bridges, fortifications, docks, canals, basins, &c. &c. An immense tonnage of stones, bricks, timber, &c. is deeply embedded, which never will meet the exterior eye; but on which are to be landed the treasures of foreign climes. Sunday School teaching is a pile-driving system throughout; "Line upon line, line upon line; precept upon precept, precept upon precept." The Sunday Scholar rises into life; his intellectual attainments are perhaps put to the credit-account of some Mechanics' Institute; what

is religious in him is assigned to some Minister of the Gospel; and so, between the two, the labours of the Sunday School Teacher are, by the distance of time, unrecognised altogether. 4. The great reciprocal law, or re-acting principle of supply and demand has almost died away, in reference to Sabbath Schools. This re-action is the universal stimulus of all public bodies; whether political, commercial, civil, intellectual, or religious. The forty years' continuance and extension of the Sabbath School Institution, aided collaterally by those powerful engines, the National and Lancasterian Schools, have brought up the population to a point, so to speak, that leaves little or no stimulus to the Sabbath-School Teacher on the present mode of conducting the Institution; and nothing but a re-organization of the Sabbath-School, on a much higher grade, can attract all those talents into the work, or spiritual market, which at present remain unemployed in the cabinet of the Church of Christ*.

The moral condition of the children connected with the Wesleyan Societies demanded special help; the Conference supplied that demand by a course of catechisms, which furnish an amount of scriptural knowledge in a small compass, perhaps unrivalled in the kingdom. Special care for the rising generation is coeval with the existence of Methodism; not only in common with the Ministers of Christ generally, but as forming an integral part of the

* The following anecdote will illustrate the point under discussion. Some years ago a gentleman left England to reside on his estate in a tropical climate. He took with him a hive of bees. The transported little colony soon filled their hive with fine honey; expecting, of course, the approach of winter. No winter arrived; the bees made no more honey, but merely used the hive as a covert from the rain. Here, the habits of the instinct were affected by the law of supply and demand.

Conference-discussions from their commencement*. In 1768, Mr. Wesley again called the attention of the Preachers to the subject, observing, that "unless care be taken of the rising generation, the present revival of religion, by Methodism, would be *res unius ætatis*, only the age of a man; he exhorted them "to spend an hour or two a week with the children, whether the Preachers liked it or not."

"A Sunday-School is strictly and entirely a *religious* institution, whose object is to train up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and that whatever has not a direct tendency to this end, is equally inconsistent with the principal design of such charities, and with the sanctity of the sacred day in which they are conducted, and that ultimately it will prove subversive of all genuine moral and religious effect. We regard it as essential to the religious character of Sunday-Schools, that the children should be carefully instructed by Catechisms in the doctrines and duties of religion; that they should be accustomed to read the Scriptures, accompanied with the pious advices and explanations of their Teachers; and that they should on every Sabbath be regularly brought to the public worship of God; and that the Teachers themselves, should be persons who 'fear God and work righteousness,' 'apt to teach' and enforce the truths of experimental and practical piety. Under the direction of such views, these valuable institutions

* Without depreciating the excellence of Dr. Chalmers' "Christian and Civic Economy of large Towns," it is but justly due to Mr. Wesley's character to observe, that scarcely one hint or suggestion which Dr. Chalmers recommends, to meliorate the condition of large towns, but may be found in the early Minutes of the Conference, long before Mr. Raikes and Dr. Chalmers were known. In the "Christian and Civic Economy" the *reasonings* are highly energetic; in the Wesleyan Minutes, the *commands* are laconically given.

will be the means of spreading through society the principles of truth and holiness ; of preserving from the poison of infidelity, now, alas ! so industriously diffused, thousands of our rising youth ; of conveying light and purity into the dwellings of the poor, and of correcting the morals of Society. They may then with hope and confidence be commended to the blessing of God.*” For many years the Sabbath Schools, managed by Members of the Wesleyan Connexion, were rather in alliance with Methodism, than forming an integral part of the body. The Minutes of 1827, however, incorporated all the Schools into the Wesleyan Economy ; subjected their management to the controul of the respective vestries ; and thereby secured the continuance of such Teachers and systems as would most promote the sacred ends of the Institution. The Conference assigned four “ general principles,” or reasons, for the interference taken with the Wesleyan Sabbath Schools. 1. “ Sunday Schools should be *strictly and entirely religious* Institutions ; and ought therefore to be Schools for the *christian* instruction and education of the children of the poor ;—as it is only on this ground that the occupation of the Lord’s day in tuition, can be held to consist with the due observance of the *christian* Sabbath. 2. Schools designed for the religious education of poor children ought to be conducted in distinct and avowed *connexion* with some particular branch of the visible *church of Christ*. 3. Sunday-Schools should be most conscientiously and anxiously so conducted, that they may not interfere, farther than an invincible necessity may compel, with the *primary and universal* duties of the holy Sabbath, and, in particular, with the constant attendance of Teachers and children on the public worship of God’s House, at the hours most generally devoted to that

* Minutes, 1819, p. 64.

purpose, and best adapted to secure their edification. 4. On the same ground of vigilant concern for the best interests both of children and of their Teachers, the *bustle* and the *secularity* of mere *School-business* should be as much as possible avoided in the management of Sunday Schools; and the spiritual objects and character of the Institutions should be so carefully kept in mind, as to regulate and controul the whole plan and process of Sabbath education*." These "general principles" not only bespeak just conceptions of the moral wants of the rising generation, but are imperiously called for by the present condition of Sabbath Schools in all populous towns†. The reiterated advice of the Conference on the subject of Sabbath Schools indicates neither apostasy nor apathy.

II. *The repeated and solemn recognition of the great principles of the Gospel and of Methodism, in the various Conferences since Mr. Wesley's death, is entitled to the*

• Minutes, 1827.

† In Hull the total number of Sunday Scholars under Wesleyan-Methodist Instruction is 1122; of these, 576 are under daily tuition: and nearly *two-thirds* of those who are not under daily instruction rank in the higher classes, and follow some business on the week-day.

	MASON STREET.		GROVES.		DRYFOOL		POTTERY		L. UNION STREET.		CHURCH STREET.	
	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.
Scholars under daily tuition	121	66	61	55	30	59	32	25	29	24	43	31
Scholars not daily taught..	103	61	40	58	21	37	41	29	42	33	49	29

respectful credence of all who, at the same time, sit under a Methodist ministry. Whatever inconsistency men may fasten on the Conference, none can be so glaring as that of eulogizing them as *preachers* yet discrediting them as *legislators*; and yet a few men may be found who stately sit under a Methodist ministry, and at the same time, indulge uncourteous and dishonorable sentiments concerning the Conference. It ought never to be forgotten that many of the discussions of Conference could not possibly be interpreted in any other way than a pastoral and fervent desire to advance the piety and usefulness of the parties concerned, whether private or official Members of the Connexion. A few instances may be quoted: "Societies must be formed wherever the Wesleyan ministry is established; otherwise the Preachers cannot watch over them in love, neither can the believers bear each other's burden. To preach where is the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers, and where is most fruit."—"Field-preaching is not contrary to any law, either of God or man, we have used it too sparingly; we must *seek* them; we are called specially to go into the highways; and more labourers must be sent into that part of the harvest, where God pours out his spirit more abundantly;—"The greatest hindrances to Methodism are from rich, cowardly, lazy Methodists; regard them not, neither Stewards, Leaders, nor People; go, in God's name, into the most public places, and call all to repent and believe the Gospel. Every Superintendent should preach out of doors every Sunday, especially in *old* Societies, lest they settle upon their lees." "Warn all against niceness in hearing, which is a great and prevailing evil. Field-preaching not to be neglected to please any one, neither Stewards, nor Society, nor rich men; otherwise the work of God will be checked." "Preachers and their wives must not dress too gay,

neither must Preachers' wives absent themselves from God's house; a most hurtful example to the Societies; neither must private Members be gay in their appearance, nor worldly minded. The Quarterly Fasts must not be neglected. "The Sabbath must be more punctually and sacredly regarded; so that no engagement with religious institutions, should induce neglect of God's own direct and immediate ordinances, such as the public preaching, pious conversation, private prayer, reading the Holy Scriptures."—Members to meet in the classes most contiguous to their residence, that they may be the more readily visited." "Pastoral addresses adopted to stir up the remembrance and faith of the people."—"Private-house prayer meetings and preaching to be as generally adopted as can comport with other necessary duties."—"Leaders exhorted to converse frequently with the Preachers; report the case of Sick Members, and to meet each others' Classes."—Leaders, themselves, when chosen, to be examined as to their moral character, and fitness for their work, and their duties to be specially pointed out."—"The sacrament to be partaken by Members at least once a month, and to stay till the whole service is concluded."—"Lending a Ticket to get a stranger into Love-Feasts to be visited by three months' suspension from Society."—"Heads of families to catechise their children regularly, and to read the Word of God in their families."—"Weekly bands to be punctually and diligently improved."—"Members marrying with unbelievers to be expelled."—"Leaders to be strictly examined in their method of leading their Class."—"The sacred Scriptures to be publicly read as a part of the Sunday Morning Service."—"Every Methodist to stand to sing, and kneel to pray, in the public services; cases of bodily infirmity excepted."—"Not changing the Stewards more frequently has been attended

with evil consequences; in some instances they have been ready to ride over the Preachers' heads*."

In the Minutes of 1820, is perhaps the most solemn recognition which the Conference ever did, or ever could, make of their duty as private christians, or as public ministers; and which fully equals in purity and sentiment, though not so laconically expressed, any Minutes issued during Mr. Wesley's life. "What measures can we adopt for the increase of spiritual religion among our Societies and Congregations, and for the extension of the work of God in our native Country? After long and deeply serious deliberation on this important question, we have unanimously agreed to the following results: 1. We, on this solemn occasion, devote ourselves afresh to God; and resolve, in humble dependence on his grace, to be more than ever attentive to *personal* religion, and to the christian instruction and government of *our own* families. 2. Let us endeavour, in our public ministry, to preach constantly all those leading and vital Doctrines of the Gospel, which peculiarly distinguished the original Methodist Preachers, whose labours were so signally blessed by the Lord, and to preach them in our primitive method,—evangelically, experimentally, zealously, and with great plainness and simplicity; giving to them a decided prominence in *every* sermon, and labouring to *apply* them closely, affectionately, and energetically to the consciences of the different classes of our hearers. 3. Let us consecrate ourselves fully and entirely to our proper work as servants of Christ and his Church, giving ourselves "wholly" to it, both in public and in private, and guarding against all occupations of our time and thoughts, which have no direct connexion

* Minutes, *seriatim*.

with our great calling, and which would injuriously divert our attention from the momentous task of saving souls, and taking care of the flock of Christ. 4. Let us “covet earnestly the best gifts” to qualify us for an acceptable and useful ministry; let us seek them in prayer from Him who is the Father of Light, and Fountain of Wisdom; ‘let us stir up,’ and improve by study and diligent cultivation, ‘the gift that is in us;’ and strive, in every way, to be workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;’—taking care, however, that whatever qualifications we may acquire and use, our ministry, shall, at least, by the divine blessing, be always characterised by sound evangelical doctrine, by plainness of speech, and by a spirit of tender affection and burning zeal. 5. Let us frequently read, and carefully study Mr. Wesley’s ‘Rules of a Helper,’ and other parts of the large Minutes which relate to the duties of a Preacher and Pastor. 6. In order to promote an increase of the congregations, and a revival of the work of God, let us have recourse, even in our old-established Circuits, to the practice of *preaching out of doors*; *seeking*, in order to *save* that which is lost. 7. In every Circuit, let us try to open new places, let us try *again* places which have not been *recently* visited; let us be increasingly attentive to the supply and superintendence of the *country-places* already on the plan; let us not be satisfied till every town, village, and hamlet in our neighbourhoods shall be blessed, as far as we can possibly accomplish it, with the means of grace and salvation; in a word, let *every* Methodist Preacher consider himself as called to be, in point of enterprise, zeal, and diligence, a *Home Missionary*, and to *enlarge* and extend, as well as *keep*, the Circuit to which he is appointed. 8. Let us, wherever it shall appear practicable, especially in the old and large Societies, employ some active, zealous men, whose piety and general character shall be approved by

the Leaders' Meetings, to attempt the formation of new Classes in suitable neighbourhoods, where he may hope, by that method, to gather into the fold of Christ some persons who 'are not far from the kingdom of God,' but who need special invitation, and are not likely to 'give themselves' fully 'to the Lord, and to us by the will of God,' without more than ordinary labour and spiritual attention. 9. Let us speak plainly, and pointedly, in every place, both in those occasional meetings of the Society at which strangers are allowed to be present, and, in our sermons, on the duty and advantage of christian communion; and exhort all who are seeking salvation, to avail themselves, without delay, of the help of our more private means of grace. 10. Let us encourage public Prayer Meetings, especially those which are held at times which do not interfere with our general worship, in the houses of our friends, in different parts of a town or neighbourhood; such meetings having been long proved to be, when prudently conducted by persons of established piety and competent gifts, and duly superintended by the Preachers, and by the Leaders' Meetings, valuable nurseries for our Congregations and Societies, and means of salvation to many who could not have been reached at first in any other method. 11. In country places, where a full supply of preaching cannot be obtained, either by Travelling or Local Preachers, let suitable persons, belonging to the nearest Societies, be encouraged to attend, under the direction of the Superintendent, for the purpose of Public-Prayer and Exhortation, and occasionally to read to the Congregations a short and plain Sermon on the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, until such places can be favoured with other and more regular opportunities of instruction in righteousness. 12. Let us ourselves remember, and endeavour to impress on our people, that we, as a body, do not exist for the purposes of party; and that we

are especially bound, by the example of our Founder, by the original principle on which our Societies are formed, and by our constant professions before the world, to avoid a narrow, bigoted, and sectarian spirit, to abstain from needless and unprofitable disputes on minor subjects of theological controversy, and as far as we innocently can, to 'please all men for their good unto edification.' Let us, therefore, maintain towards all denominations of christians, who 'hold the head,' the kind and catholic spirit of primitive Methodism; and, according to the noble maxim of our Fathers in the Gospel, 'be the friends of all, the enemies of none.' 13. Let us, at least in every large town, establish weekly meetings for the children of our friends, according to our ancient custom; and let us pay particular spiritual attention, in public and in private, to the young people of our Societies and Congregations. 14. Let us meet the Societies regularly on the Lord's day, and frequently on the week-day evenings, in *country* places, where we do not preach on the Lord's Day:—Let the Members be accustomed, on such occasions, to show their Society Tickets;—and let us endeavour to make these Meetings interesting and appropriate to our Members, as such,—by giving to our addresses an immediate reference to the state of the people, to the circumstances of each Society, and to their peculiar duties, both personal and domestic, as professors of religion, and as Methodists, and by frequently explaining and enforcing our own rules. 15. Let us revive, where it has been neglected, and promote, in every place, the observance of those parts of our discipline which refer to watch-nights, private and public bands, and quarterly days of solemn fasting and prayer. 16. Let us, wherever we have access and opportunity, be diligent in *pastoral* visits to our people, at their own houses, especially to the sick, the careless, and the lukewarm. 17. But as such private visits must, in many cases, from our

plan of continual itinerancy and village-preaching, and from the number of Members in the larger Societies, be greatly limited, let us endeavour so to arrange in our several Circuits the plans for the Quarterly public visitation of the Classes, as to allow full time for a more minute examination into the christian knowledge, experience, and practice of the Members, and for pastoral enquiries, instructions, and counsels, respecting personal and family religion. 18. Let us regularly meet the Class Leaders, and examine their Class Papers, in town and country; and do all we can to engage both of them, and our respected brethren, the Local Preachers, to co-operate with us, in their respective departments, in promoting vital godliness among our people, and extending the work of the Lord. 19. As much depends, under the blessing of God, on the piety, knowledge, zeal, activity, and christian temper of our Leaders, as well as on their firm attachment to the doctrines, discipline, and cause of Methodism, let us never nominate a new Leader, until we have conscientiously satisfied ourselves by previous enquiry and personal examination, as to the character and qualifications of the person proposed; and let us act uniformly on the rule respecting the public examination of Leaders, which is found in our Minutes of 1811. 20. Let us, whenever a new Leader, nominated by us, and accepted by the Leaders' Meeting, shall be first introduced into the Meeting, take that opportunity of stating the duties which belong to the office, and of enforcing them on all present, 21. Let us affectionately, but firmly, enforce on the Leaders, as an essential article of our pastoral discipline, and one, which, in consequence of our own constant itinerancy, cannot be dispensed with, the rule of the Society in which it is stated to be the duty of a Leader, 'to see every Member in his class *once in every week.*' 22. Let us pay particular attention to backsliders, and endeavour, in the spirit of meekness, to restore

them that have been overtaken in a fault, and, by private efforts, as well as by our public ministrations, to recover the fallen out of the snare of the Devil. 23. Let us afresh enforce on all our people a conscientious attendance on the Lord's Supper. 24. Let us earnestly exhort our Societies to make the best and most religious use of the rest and leisure of the Lord's Day;—let us admonish any individuals who shall be found to neglect our public worship, under pretence of visiting the sick, or other similar engagements; let us show to our people the evil of *wasting* those portions of the Sabbath, which are not spent in public worship, in visits, or in receiving company, to the neglect of private prayer, of the perusal of the scriptures, and of family duties, and, often, to the serious spiritual injury of servants, who are improperly employed, and deprived of the public means of grace; let us set an example in this matter, by refusing for ourselves and for our families to spend in visits, when there is no call of duty or necessity, the sacred hours of the Holy Sabbath;—and let us never allow the Lord's Day to be *secularised* by meetings of mere *business*, when such business only refers to the *temporal* affairs of the Church of God. 25. With a view to promote, in the families and Schools of our connexion, the uniform and regular practice of *catechetical* instruction, which, especially in the present state of our body, and of our country at large, we deem to be of the highest importance.—we agree that a series of catechisms shall be prepared, and recommended for general use among us: and we earnestly request Mr. Benson and Mr. Watson, to draw up such catechisms, and to submit them to the examination of the next Conference. 26. In conducting our Leaders' and Quarterly Meetings, and all other official Meetings among us, let us affectionately and steadily discountenance the spirit of strife and debate, and promote, in the management of all our affairs, both by our advice and example, the temper and manner of men who

are acting for God in the service of his Church. Let the introduction of all topics of useless or irritating discussion, not legitimately connected with the proper business of such Meetings, be prudently repressed.—Let us remember that in a large body, the only way to *live in peace*, and comfort, is to *walk by rule*, and (to use the language of Mr. Wesley) ‘not to mend our rules, but to keep them for conscience’ sake’. And while we readily and cheerfully protect all our Members, in Meetings in which we preside, in the exercise of such functions as belong to them, according to our laws and general usages, let us not forget that we are under solemn obligations to conduct ourselves on such occasions, not as the mere *chairmen* of public meetings, but as the *pastors* of christian Societies, put in trust by the ordinance of God, and by their own voluntary association with us, with the scriptural superintendence of their spiritual affairs, and responsible to the great head of the Church for the faithful discharge of the duties of that trust. 27. We affectionately exhort those of our own people, who are laudably active in various benevolent Institutions; while they persevere in every good word and work, to guard against the danger of expending all their leisure and influence on mere local and subordinate charities, so as to neglect God’s own direct and immediate Institutions, such as the public preaching of the Gospel, or to deprive themselves of the opportunity of regularly attending their classes, and of private prayer and reading of the Holy Scriptures. It should not be forgotten that the *great spiritual work of God* depends, under the divine blessing, on the general and conscientious use of his Institutions; and that, in the *success* of that work, all other good undertakings among us had their origin, and must ever have their principal support. ‘These things ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone’. 28. In order that the state of the work may be kept under the eye of the Preachers, we agree to revive uniformly the good old

custom of keeping Quarterly Schedules in every Circuit, each of which contain a correct statement, for the quarter to which it belongs, of persons admitted on trial,—new Members, removals, deaths, backslidings, conversions, &c.

29. Every Superintendent is required to leave for his successor, proper lists of Subscribers and of Members, &c.

30. But as we are deeply sensible that the great thing to be desired, in order to a revival and extension of the work of God, without which, no resolution, or labours, or regulations will avail, is *a new and more abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit* on ourselves, on our Societies, and on our Congregations,—we solemnly agree to seek that blessing in humble and earnest prayer. And we hereby appoint that the day of the next quarterly fast, shall be observed in all our Circuits, as a day of *special* fasting and prayer to Almighty God.—Let meetings for public supplication be held, in as many places as possible, in every Circuit; and let the Preachers speak largely and particularly on the subject in their sermons on the preceding Lord's Day. 31. The various articles including in this Minute, shall be read by every Chairman at the next regular Annual Meeting of his District; and shall then be made the subject of serious conversation among the brethren, with a view to their particular bearing on the spiritual state and circumstances of each District respectively."

PROPOSITION XI.

ALL CHECKS AGAINST PASTORAL MISRULE, WHICH DO NOT ACCORD WITH THE SPIRIT AND PRECEPTS OF CHRIST, ARE UTTERLY INADEQUATE TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR DESIGNS.

THE best of men are but men at best; and the corruption of the best thing, is the worst of all corruptions. The character of a minister is sacred, the man who assumes the character is frail; so that ministerial excellence is seen under many imperfections, and must be estimated with many limitations. The grand enquiry now is in what way can his frailties, *as a man*, be so checked as not to diminish his usefulness, *as a minister*. To meet such a question fairly, it is necessary to examine the *nature, origin, mode of operation, and utmost capability* of that kind of power, which an unworthy minister would employ to further his own sinister views and desires. FIVE species of checks have been proposed by different theorists, as suitable to be incorporated into the Wesleyan Constitution.

I. *To strengthen the lay influence in the vestries, by investing each Leader with as many disposable votes, as he has Members of Society under his care.* This scheme, the product of a Cornish man's brains, strikes a fatal blow at the spiritual ends for which the office of Leader was primarily instituted. During the first fifty-nine years of Methodism, the Leaders had no legislative existence; they were consulted or not consulted, as the Superintendents

judged expedient. At the negotiations of 1797, were added to their spiritual functions, certain vestry-powers or prerogatives, by which the personal caprice or unconstitutional encroachment of a Superintendent might be resisted. The theory, under discussion, sets out on a principle radically defective : viz. that *great* endowments of spiritual gifts and graces to edify the Church, are necessarily accompanied by great sagacity to legislate for the church. Fact often proves the reverse : many very holy men make poor legislators and financiers. Every man in his own order ; but it is the same spirit that worketh all in all. A *new* and extraneous motive would be, by this theory, injected into the minds of Leaders ; who thereby would have a *special* interest in admitting and retaining Members ; which, under the present administration, finds no operation. And yet the *scheme* displays more of the equity of popular representation than any other plan ; though the spirituality of the office would be irrecoverably lost. It is worthy of remark that “ the ability to talk in a vestry ” never has formed any component part of the qualifications expected in a candidate to the office of Leader ; his moral character, religious experience, and Wesleyan orthodoxy, are his proper credentials. It would employ no little tactics or casuistry to ascertain, at what period, and under what circumstances, a Leader obtains a legislative right to moot any of the fundamental principles of the Constitution ; that he did not first enter the vestry with any such prerogatives, is certain ; much less did he imagine his vestry-“ sayings and doings ” should expand or compress in the ratio of the numbers under his tutorage. Who can describe the jealousies, intrigues, party-feeling, &c. to which such a theory must necessarily give rise ? The worst part of nature, and the least devout part of the Members, would avail themselves of such a posture of things for the most unchristian purposes. It is a favourite maxim with the man of rights,

“that men will abuse power, in proportion to the quantum they possess.” Does he mean to insinuate that the Leader, the Trustee, or the Local Preacher, will not abuse his power in the same ratio as an Itinerant Preacher? If words mean any thing, such an insinuation is conveyed in most of the inflammatory publications against Methodism. The theory, so far from checking pastoral misrule, would lead to incessant struggles for ascendancy among the lay influential Members, and the progress of conversion would be either destroyed or seriously retarded.

CHECK II. *A Delegate sent from each Circuit to sit with the Conference, and to legislate with them on the affairs of the Connexion.* This check has been termed by some the great catholicon, or purifier of the system. To this it may be replied, that the very essence of a popular representation, or pure democracy, must consist, 1. In the legislative power and right, supposed to emanate from the people, equally pervading the mass of the people. 2. In each distinctive locality exercising neither more nor less than its quota of legislative influence. How far this proportion could be preserved, may be seen in the following scale, constructed from the Conference-Minutes. A slight inspection of the scale will show, that as the lay representative theory goes on the supposition of the power being exercised by the people *uniformly*, the numerical inequality of the Circuits divests the theory of all practical utility.

There at this time*,

14 Circuits, each containing from 20 to 100 Members.

27 100 to 200

* Minutes, 1828.

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39	Circuits, each containing from	200 to	300 Members.
17	300 to	400
35	400 to	500
33	.....	500 to	600
33	.....	600 to	700
28	.....	700 to	800
13	.....	800 to	900
16	.....	900 to	1000
9	.....	1000 to	1100
11	.....	1100 to	1200
5	.....	1200 to	1300
9	.....	1300 to	1400
3	.....	1400 to	1500
5	.....	1500 to	1600
4	.....	1600 to	1700
4	.....	1700 to	1800
4	.....	1800 to	1900
3	.....	1900 to	2000
2	.....	2100 to	2200
4	.....	2200 to	2300
2	.....	2400 to	2500
2	.....	2500 to	2600
1	Circuit, containing from...	2800 to	2900
1	.....	2900 to	3000
1	.....	3200 to	3300

Let any sceptical-discontented Member examine this table, and shew how the theory of an *equitable* representation can be preserved just and proportionate. As the premises rest on the ground of natural right, and as all men are supposed to be equally entitled to their natural prerogatives, it must follow, at whatever *ratio* the representation is fixed, no representative can exceed or fall short of that *ratio* without bringing in a disproportion, destructive of a pure democracy, or proper representation of the people.

Peterhead is the *smallest* Circuit in Great Britain, and contains *thirty-two* Members. The four Circuits of Manchester contain *six thousand six hundred and eighty-two* Members. If the former be taken as the *ratio*, it will follow, that for every *thirty-two* Members there must be *one* representative, or the proportion is destroyed; which *ratio* produces 7652 Delegates; which, at the rate of £12 expence of each man in travelling, maintenance, and detention from business, amounts to £91,824; a very modest sum certainly! If the largest Society be taken as the *ratio*, it is manifest that London must lose 9970 parts out of 10002 of its legislative influence, or send 312 Delegates to the approaching Conference; Manchester must lose 6650 parts out of 6682 of its legislative influence, or send 209 representatives to Conference; Sheffield must lose 3168 parts out of 3200 of its legislative influence, or send 100 Members to the approaching Conference! &c. &c. The "man of rights" may affirm all this to be ridiculous; very true, nothing more so; but who makes it ridiculous? He who maintains that one Member sent from *each* Circuit is a *proper* representation of the people. But fact, as well as theory, proves its unadaptation. By examining the "Minutes of the New Connexion," *seriatim*, it will be found, in most instances, the Delegation-scheme has not fulfilled its requirements, by leaving the preponderance on the side of the ministry, when the votes have been taken in any critical juncture. That Connexion set out in 1797, with a firm determination to act agreeably to this regulation; the law was made an *essential* condition of their union. It was soon found impracticable to comply with the peculiar and essential plan of one Circuit being *each* time represented by a Preacher and Delegate; and their Minutes show that nearly one half of their Conference-business has been transacted without the requisite compliance with their grand fundamental theory of Lay Repre-

sentation. Allowing, however, that this theory be effected by the Societies; its admission does not restore the equilibrium of power; it merely transfers it to other hands. Delegation is ostensibly founded on an alleged inequality of power; that the power of the ministry to oppress, must be neutralised by an increased power of the laity. An inequality now subsists in the relative character of the larger and smaller Societies; and of the three parties now existent, one party will become people-ridden and priest-ridden too!! This is a matter that must be examined presently.

CHECK III. *A Delegate sent from each Circuit, to sit apart from the Conference, and, during their sittings, to pass every bill or law through both houses, before it shall be adopted.* The same inequality and expense so greatly objectionable, will apply to this Check as to the preceding; and as to the *peculiar* benefit proposed by their meeting separately, that subject has been amply discussed in a former Proposition on "Separate Meetings."

CHECK IV. *A lay aristocracy to sit with the Conference, which shall be co-extensive and co-efficient with the ministerial power.*

CHECK V. *A lay aristocracy, co-extensive and co-existent with the ministerial power, but which shall meet apart from the Conference.* The practical difference between the fourth and fifth Check is so slight, and the arguments applicable to one being also applicable to the other, the two Checks are classed together. By a lay aristocracy is meant a number of influential men, chosen by the people, to share in the legislation, to whose fidelity and guardianship, the liberties and interests of the people may be safely intrusted. It should be recollected, in

limine, that it is in the nature of an aristocracy to verge towards an oligarchy; i. e. the executive originally reposed in *many* persons, to be actually managed by *few*. It is questionable whether there was ever any other than an oligarchical power in the world. This tendency of governments, to lessen the number of their efficient agents, has been not only apparent in the mightiest empires on earth, but it is daily visible in every Institution or local Committee. A few, whose intellect, station, and character, direct measures, command general assent, sway the whole, while the majority of the professed executive, sit as "cyphers in the great account," or move, as *automata*, at the nod of the all majestic few.—The Meetings held by Trustees, Local Preachers, or Leaders, in the Wesleyan Connexion, are illustrative of this sentiment; they are the result of the same concentrative tendency, and powerfully operate against declamatory remarks, urged by some, against the *exclusive* Meetings of the Travelling Preachers as found in the different Conferences. The *Local* Preachers have *exclusive* Meetings, to which no Trustees or Leaders have a right to enter; agreeably to the usage, &c. of the Connexion; and, in the same manner, other cases, illustrative of the propriety of the *exclusive* principle may be adduced. It is true, in political affairs, after some awful revulsion or anarchy of the state, Government is sometimes modelled after the design, or principle, of a free representation of the people, though in due proportion, impossible, until every square mile be equally populous; the attempt, however, could it be preserved, would answer all ordinary purposes; but, the *tendency* of this supposed democracy, and which passes for such, in the estimation of thousands, to retire into an aristocracy; and, of an aristocracy, to concentrate itself within an oligarchy, becomes more and more visible. So long as the oligarchy acts for the benefit of the whole, it is well; but, if the executive becomes oppressive,

and the happiness of the people is cut off, some daring men will arise, and, by sheer physical strength, hurl the wretches from their station, seize the reins of Government, and remodel the system on the former intention of popular representation; the oligarchical, or concentrative *tendency*, re-acts in the same manner, and thus the political game is renewed, *ad infinitum*. Does not the history of every nation, under the canopy of heaven, echo the truth of these statements? These remarks are intended to show, that a lay representation in the Wesleyan Methodist legislature, will inevitably result in the mixture of lay oligarchy and priestly oligarchy. These consequences are not at all invalidated, by saying, that representatives, from all parts of the kingdom, will check this concentrative tendency; this would be hazarding a supposition, not merely unsupported by historical evidence, but palpably contradicted by the whole tenor of universal history. As well may the efflux of a river repel the influx of the tides, as delegation, though *nominally* continued, from losing, by insensible diminutions, its executive energy, in a limited aristocracy, or rather oligarchy. Hitherto the argument has been pursued on a presumption of the uniform progress and extension of a system, thus blending a lay and ministerial legislation; which, if extended on a scale of vast and imposing magnitude, will assume the aspect insisted upon in the preceding remarks. Power has a sort of attractive force, which gives it a tendency to accumulate; insomuch that what, in the beginning, is a distinction barely perceptible, grows, in process of time, a remarkable disparity. In *Proposition III.* it was argued that the "office possessing preterity of existence, and priority of importance, ought to have the directing sway." The office is undoubtedly the ministry; and it not merely directs, but absorbs. Let an indifferent spectator enter a vestry, and observe the workings of any measure: will he not observe that in every

new and doubtful case, the bias of the imagination will be in favor of him who occupies the higher place, were the superiority to be ever so inconsiderable? "Though names are but sounds, those who are conversant in the history of mankind will readily allow, that they have greater influence on the opinions of the generality of men, than most people are aware of. Besides, it is in the nature of power, unless guarded by a watchful jealousy (rarely to be found among inexperienced and undesigning people) to accumulate and gather strength. Distinguish one at first but by a small degree of superiority, and the distinction you have made will very soon, and, as it were, naturally carry other distinctions with it; there is something here that resembles gravitation in material things. As the quantity of matter increases, its attractive force increases, and it more easily draws other matter to itself; so that what was originally only a precedency of rank, becomes at last a precedency of power; and this will be considerably accelerated, if superior opulence join its aid in producing it*." The impression which many persons imbibe of the specific quality, present degree, and ultimate extension of Conference-power, grows out of a palpable misconception of the term *power*. Power appears resolvable into two classes. 1. *The power of influence*; arising from moral or intellectual suasion. 2. *The power of compulsion*; arising from superior bodily prowess, or physical force. In a civil polity, the *former* suggests the necessity of a social compact, for the preservation of human life, against the designs of the sanguinary; and the *consentaneous* aid of the *latter* is afforded, by the community, in any emergency, from a sense of common danger: so that political power ultimately resolves itself into a supreme

power over life and death, according to agreed laws, and becomes properly and peculiarly *the power of compulsion*. But, in the beginnings of a religious community, the power of its ministers is manifestly that of *moral influence*, the impress of veneration and love, on the hearts of the people, towards men of high sanctity and disinterested zeal; to whose *dicta* the people yield prompt and entire submission. This *power of moral influence*, however varied in weight, or extension, ever remains *intrinsically* the same, until the admixture of some *extrinsic* property. Extension is not a quality; and were the Wesleyan Ministry to pervade Europe, as much as it exists in Great Britain, the quality will remain *specifically* THE SAME until the conjunction of some lay or political power shall have changed its original character. The force of this reasoning is not diminished by a supposed or real declension of piety, in the ministers who first inspired veneration in the people, so long as the impress remains; but, as the decay of fervid piety and pure zeal becomes visible, so the veneration of the people will subside, and their voluntary supplies and submission will diminish, until the Preachers are brought to the crisis of redeeming their character among the people; or, of obtaining political power to demand and enforce necessary supplies. Instead of five species of Checks, theorists may invent five thousand species, and be as remote from the attainment of their object, as at first; unless some GRAND CHECK be adopted and resolutely followed, that shall counteract the concentrative tendency of power. It is remarkable that all writers against Methodism have concurred in one point; that of ascribing corruption in a Church to ministerial misrule. This charge is directly contrary to principle and to fact. No mischief ever was, ever will be, or indeed ever can be, inflicted by priestly power alone, unaided or unsanctioned by some lay influence. Of what use is either half of an

unrivetted pair of scissors? The simile is perfectly analogous to the case in hand: a few ministers of themselves can do no harm; a few gentlemen of themselves can do no harm. If mischief, misrule, or corruption take place, it is after the league or coalition of a few gentlemen and a few ministers has been effected. It is when the scissors are rivetted, that they cut. Where, then, is the justice of pouring forth immeasurable ignominy on the ministry, when it must be manifest, even on the supposition of the facts charged being substantially correct, the lay gentry have been conjoint principals in the events? The lay oligarchy sinks or swims with the implicated ministry; or, at least, ought to share the odium. The junction of lay and priestly influence, contributing to corruption, misrule, and oppression, is ever preceded by a long but sure process of accumulation of power; the accumulation is the unfailing product of the *concentrative tendency*; hence, no change in the *mode* of administration, or professed executive, touches the *spirit* of the difficulty. A check must be sought somewhere else. Nonsense, high as Mount Atlas, has been heaped up by paper-theorists, and constitution-menders, and will thus continue to be amassed, until their attention is directed to some check that shall counteract the *concentrative tendency*.

This concentration and accumulation of power, constituting the master-spirit of the question, and to which every evil in civil or religious Society may be ultimately traced, are nevertheless susceptible of a complete counteraction, and conquest. A check or remedy against misrule, is provided; and though the world and the church have not witnessed the effects of its power, because of its nearly universal neglect, the moral efficiency of the check is nevertheless incontrovertible. "*Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.*"

if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But, if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."* As this check is the ONLY one sanctioned by divine authority, there is sufficient reason to know from Scripture and fact, that all other checks will be unable to arrest the *concentrative tendency* above-mentioned. Lord Bacon says that "Knowledge is power;" true, but that power derives all its energy and efficiency from the ignorance and cowardice by which it is surrounded. The scriptural Check, just quoted, is not restricted to acts of immorality but applies to misrule, as well as to misconduct; to ministers as well as to laymen. The application of it to the Wesleyan Polity shall close the proposition. Whatever virtue and energy other Checks may possess, they yield no practical influence, only so far as they embody the spirit of this omnipotent and scriptural Check; for, it is obvious, the good proposed is but feebly and partially obtained by the tedious and circuitous route by which all other Checks reach the party concerned. Mr. Wesley's thoughts on the above passage are expressed in his usual terse and sententious style†; and will, with an occasional paraphrase, well illustrate our present subject‡. "FIRST, 'If thy brother shall sin against thee, go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone.' The most literal way of following this

* St. Mathew xviii. 15. 16. 17. † Sermons, vol. L. p 616.

‡ The Author offers no apology for the length of the extract, as it is so adapted to the case in hand. The endless talkers about the "march of intellect and omnipotence of public opinion," must perceive that the DOINGS of a Mr. Wesley, outweigh the SAYINGS of ten thousand theorists.

rule, where it is practicable, is the best : Therefore, if thou seest with thine own eyes a brother, a fellow-christian commit undeniable sin, (*or a Superintendent to misrule or oppress a Society*) or hearest it with thine own ears, so that it is impossible for thee to doubt the fact, then thy part is plain. Take the very first opportunity of going to him ; and if thou canst have access, tell him of his fault between thee and him alone.' Indeed great care is to be taken that this is done in a right spirit, and in a right manner. The success of a reproof greatly depends on the spirit wherein it is given. Be not, therefore, wanting in earnest prayer to God, that it, it may be given in a lowly spirit ; with a deep, piercing conviction, that it is God alone who maketh thee to differ, and that if any good be done by what is now spoken, God doeth it himself. Pray that he would guard thy heart, enlighten thy mind, and direct thy tongue to such words as He may please to bless. See that thou speak in a meek as well as a lowly spirit ; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. If he be overtaken in a fault ; he can no otherwise be restored, than in the 'spirit of meekness.' If he opposes the truth, yet he cannot be brought to the knowledge thereof, but by gentleness. Still speak in the spirit of love ' which many waters cannot quench.' If love is not conquered, it conquers all things ; See, then, that you confirm your love towards him, and you will thereby ' heap coals of fire upon his head.' 2. But see that the manner also wherein you speak, be according to the Gospel of Christ ; avoid every thing in look, gesture, word, and tone of voice, that savours of pride and self-sufficiency. Studiously avoid every thing magisterial or dogmatical, every thing that looks like arrogance, or assuming ; beware of the most distant approach to disdain, overbearing, or contempt. With equal care avoid all appearance of anger ; and though you use great plainness of speech, yet let there be no reproach, no railing accusation, no to-

ken of any warmth, but that of love. Above all, let there be no shadow of hate or ill-will, no bitterness or sourness of expression ; but use the air and language of sweetness as well as gentleness, that all may appear to flow from love in the heart. And yet this sweetness need not hinder your speaking in a serious and solemn manner ; and as far as may be, in the very words of the oracles of God, (for there are none like them,) and as under the eye of Him who is coming to judge the quick and dead. 3. If you have not an opportunity of speaking to him in person, or cannot have access, you may do it by a messenger ; by a common friend, in whose prudence, as well uprightness, you can thoroughly confide. Such a person, speaking in your name, and, in the spirit above described, may answer the same end, and in a good degree, supply your lack of service. Only beware you do not feign the want of opportunity, in order to shun the cross ; neither take it for granted that you cannot have access, without ever making the trial. Whenever you can speak in your own person, it is far better. But you should rather do it by another than not at all. This way is better than none. 4. But what if you can neither speak yourself, nor find such a messenger as you can confide in ? If this be really the case, it then only remains *to write*. And there may be some circumstances which make this the most advisable way of speaking. One of these circumstances is, when the person with whom we have to do is of so warm and impetuous a temper, as does not easily bear reproof, especially from an equal or an inferior. But it may be so introduced and softened in writing, as to make it far more tolerable. Besides, many will read the very same words, which they could not bear to hear. It does not give so violent a shock to their pride, nor so sensibly touch their honor. And suppose it makes little impression at first, they will, perhaps, give it a second reading, and upon farther con-

sideration, lay to heart what before they disregarded. If you add your name, this is nearly the same thing as going to him, unless it be rendered improper by some very particular reason*. 5. It should be well observed, not only that is a step which our Lord absolutely commands us to take, but that he commands us to take this step *first*, before we attempt any other. No alternative is allowed, no choice of any thing else: This is the way, walk thou in it. It is true; he enjoins us, if need require, to take two other steps; but they are to be taken successively *after* this step, and neither of them *before* it: much less are we to take any other step either before or *BESIDE* this. To do any thing else, or not to do this, is, therefore, equally inexcusable. 6. Do not think to excuse yourself for taking an entirely different step, by saying, 'Why, I did not speak to any one, till I was so burthened, that I could not refrain.' You was burdened! It was no wonder you should, unless your conscience was scared; for you was under the guilt of sin, of disobeying a plain commandment of God! You ought, immediately, to have gone and told 'your brother of his fault between you and him alone.' If you did not, how should you be other than burdened (unless your heart was utterly hardened) while you was trampling the command of God under foot, and 'hating your brother in your heart?' And what a way have you found to unburden yourself? God reproves you for a sin of omission, for not telling your brother of his fault; and you comfort yourself, under his reproof, by a sin of commission, by telling your brother's fault to another person! Ease, bought by sin, is a

* Extraordinary cases may occur when reproof either *could* not, or *must* not be given, only in an anonymous way: but when a mortified poltroon discharges the bile of a malignant heart in anonymous communications; set him down as a proper candidate to the office of assassin-general to the Inquisition.

dear purchase ! I trust in God, you will have no ease, but will be burdened so much the more, till you 'go to your brother, and tell him,' and no one else ! 7. I know but of one exception to this rule : there may be a peculiar case, wherein it is necessary to accuse the guilty, though absent, in order to preserve the innocent. For instance, you are acquainted with the design which a man has against the property or life of his neighbour. Now the case may be so circumstanced, that there is no other way of hindering that design from taking effect, but the making of it known, without delay, to him against whom it is laid. In this case, therefore, this rule is set aside, as is that of the Apostle, 'speak evil of no man : ' and it is lawful, yea, it is our bounden duty, to speak evil of an absent person, in order to prevent his doing evil to others and himself at the same time. But, remember, meanwhile, that all evil-speaking is, in its own nature, deadly poison. Therefore, if you are sometimes constrained to use it as a medicine, yet use it with fear and trembling ; seeing it is so dangerous a medicine, that nothing but absolute necessity can excuse you using it all. Accordingly, use it as seldom as possible ; never but when there is such a necessity ; and even then use as little of it as possible ; only so much as is necessary for the end proposed. At all other times, 'go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone.' 8. But what 'if he will not hear ?' if he repay evil for good ? if he be enraged rather than convinced ? what, if he hear to no purpose, and go on still in the evil of his way ? We must expect this will frequently be the case ; the mildest and tenderest reproof will have no effect ; but the blessing we wished for another, will return into our own bosom. And what are we to do then ? Our Lord has given us a clear and full direction. Then 'take with thee one or two more : ' This is the second step. Take one or two whom you know to be of a loving spirit, lovers of God,

and of their neighbour. See, likewise, that they be of a lowly spirit, and 'clothed with humility.' Let them also be such as are meek and gentle, patient and long-suffering; not apt to 'return evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.' Let them be men of understanding, such as are endued with wisdom from above; and men unbiassed, free from partiality, free from prejudice of any kind. Care should likewise be taken that both the persons and their characters be well known to him. And let those that are acceptable to him be chosen preferable to any others. 8. Love will dictate the manner wherein they should proceed, according to the nature of the case. Nor can any one particular manner be prescribed for all cases. But perhaps, in general, one might advise, before they enter upon the thing itself, let them mildly and affectionately declare that they have no anger or prejudice toward him, and that it is merely from a principle of good will that they now come, or at all concern themselves with his affairs. To make this the more apparent, they might then calmly attend to your repetition of your former conversation with him, and to what he said in his own defence, before they attempted to determine any thing. After this they would be better able to judge in what manner to proceed, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word might be established; that, whatever you have said, may have its full force, by the additional weight of their authority. 9. In order to this, may they not briefly repeat what you spoke, and what he answered? enlarge upon, open, and confirm the reasons which you had given; give weight to your reproof, showing how just, how kind, and how seasonable it was? and, enforce the advices and persuasions which you annexed to it? And these may likewise, hereafter, if need should require, bear witness of what was spoken. 10. With regard to this, as well as the preceding rule, we may observe, that our Lord gives us no

choice, leaves us no alternative, but expressly commands us to do this, and nothing else in the place of it. He likewise directs us when to do this; neither sooner nor later; namely, *after* we have taken the first, and *before* we have taken the third step. It is then only that we are authorised to relate the evil another has done, to those whom we desire to bear a part with us in this great instance of brotherly love. But let us have a care how we relate it to any other person, till both these steps have been taken. If we neglect to take these, or take any others, what wonder if we are burdened still? For if we are sinners before God, and against our neighbour; and how fairly soever we may colour it, yet, if we have conscience, our sin will find us out, and bring a burden upon our soul. 11. That we may be thoroughly instructed in this weighty affair, our Lord has given us a still farther direction. “If he will not hear them,” then, and not till then, ‘tell it to the Church.’ This is the third step. All the question is, How this word, ‘the Church’ is here to be understood? But the very nature of the thing will determine this, beyond reasonable doubt. You cannot tell it to the national Church, the whole body of men termed ‘the Church of England.’ Neither would it answer any christian end, if you could; this, therefore, is not the meaning of the word. Neither can you tell it to that whole body of people in England, with whom you have a more immediate connexion. Nor indeed, would this answer any good end: the word, therefore, is not to be understood thus. It would not answer any valuable end to tell the faults of every particular Member to the Church, if you would so term it, the Congregation or Society united together in London. It remains that you tell it to the Elder, or Elders in the Church, to those who are Overseers of that flock of Christ, to which you both belong, who watch over your’s and his soul; ‘as they that must give an account.’ And this should be done,

if it conveniently can, in the presence of the person concerned, and, though plainly, yet with all the tenderness and love, which the nature of the thing will admit. It properly belongs to their office, to determine concerning the behaviour of those under his care, and to rebuke according to the demerit of the offence, 'with all authority.' When, therefore, you have done this, you have done all which the word of God, or the law of love, requireth of you. You are not now partaker of his sin; but, if he perish, his blood is on his own head. 12. Here, also, let it be observed, that this, and no other, is the third step which we are to take; and that we are to take it in its order after the other two; not before the second, much less the first, unless in some very particular circumstance. Indeed, in one step, the second step may coincide with this: they may be, in a manner, one and the same. The Elder or Elders of the Church may be so connected with the offending brother, that they may set aside the necessity, and supply the place, of the one or two witnesses; so that it may suffice to tell it to them, after you have told it to your brother, 'between thee and him alone.' When you have done this, you have delivered your own soul. 'If he will not hear the Church, if he persist in his sin, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican.'" You are under no obligation to think of him any more, only when you commend him to God in prayer. You need not speak of him any more, but leave him to his own Master. Indeed, you still owe him, as to all other heathens, earnest tender good will. You owe him courtesy, and, as occasion offers, all the offices of humanity. But have no friendship, no familiarity with him, no other intercourse than with an open heathen. 13. But, if this be the rule by which christians walk, which is the land where the christians live? A few you may possibly find scattered up and down, who make a conscience of observing it. But how very few! how thinly scattered

upon the face of the earth! and where is any body of men, that universally walk thereby? Can we find them in Europe? or to go no farther, in Great Britain or Ireland? I fear not: I fear we may search these kingdoms through-out, and yet search in vain. Alas for the christian world! Alas for Protestants, for reformed christians! O, 'who will rise up with me against the wicked?' 'Who will take God's part against the evil speakers? Art thou the man? By the grace of God wilt thou be one, who art not carried away by the torrent? Art thou fully determined, God being thy helper, from this very hour, to set a watch before thy mouth, and keep the door of thy lips? From this hour wilt thou walk by this rule, 'speaking evil of no man.' If thou seest thy brother do evil, (*or thy minister misrule*) 'wilt thou tell him of his fault between thee and him alone?' Afterwards, 'take one or two' witnesses, and, then, only 'tell it to the Church.' If this be the full purpose of thy heart, then learn one lesson well, 'Hear evil of no man.' If there were no hearers, there would be no speakers of evil. And is not (according to the vulgar proverb) the receiver as bad as the thief? If then any begin to speak evil in thy hearing, check him immediately. Refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so sweetly; let him use ever so soft a manner, so mild an accent, ever so many professions of good will for him whom he is stabbing in the dark, whom he smiteth under the fifth rib! Resolutely refuse to hear, though the whisperer complain of being 'burdened till he speak.' Burdened! thou fool! dost thou travail with thy cursed secret, as a woman travaileth with child? Go then, and be delivered of thy burden in the way the Lord hath ordained! First, 'Go and tell thy brother of his fault between thee and him alone.' Next, 'take with thee one or two' common friends, and tell him in their presence: If neither of these steps take effect, then 'tell it to the Church.' But, at the peril of thy soul, tell

it to no one else, either before or after, unless in that one exempt case, when it is absolutely needful to preserve the innocent! Why shouldst thou burden another as well as thyself, by making him partaker of thy sin? O, that all you, who bear the reproach of Christ, who are in derision, called Methodists, would set an example to the Christian world, so called, at least in this one instance! Put ye away evil-speaking, tale-bearing, whispering! Let none of them proceed out of your mouth! See that you 'speak evil of no man;' of the absent, nothing but good. If ye must be distinguished, whether ye will or not, let this be the distinguishing mark of a Methodist: 'he censures no man behind his back: by this fruit you may know him.' What a blessed effect of this self-denial should we quickly feel in our hearts! How would our 'peace flow as a river,' when we thus 'followed peace with all men!' How would the love of God abound in our own souls, while we thus confirmed our love to our brethren! And what an effect would it have on all that were united together in the name of the Lord Jesus! How would brotherly love continually increase, when this grand hinderance of it was removed! All the Members of Christ's mystical body would then naturally care for each other. 'If one Member suffered, all would suffer with it;' 'if one was honored, all would rejoice with it;' and every one would love his brother 'with a pure heart fervently.' Nor is this all: but what an effect might this have, even on the wild, unthinking world! How soon would they descry in us, what they could not find among all the thousands of their brethren, and cry, as Julian the apostate to his heathen courtiers; 'see, how these christians love one another!' By this, chiefly, would God convince the world, and prepare them also for his kingdom; as we may easily learn from these remarkable words in our Lord's last solemn prayer: 'I pray for them who shall believe in me, that they may be one, as thou, Father, art in me,

and 'I in thee, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' The Lord hasten the time! The Lord enable us thus to love one another, not only 'in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth,' even as Christ hath loved us."

To this valuable extract but little more need be added: it is difficult to ascertain which is the most conspicuous, the piety, the manliness, the integrity, or the wisdom, that abounds throughout the whole. It affords, however, an ample solution to what has been termed the "mystery of power," the cause of the concentrative tendency, which leads to accumulation, and so progresses through its several stages till it is enthroned on an undivided dominion of power, wielded by the hand of some irresponsible despot. In this divine and only efficient check against mis-government may be observed: 1. ITS DELICACY: "between thee and him alone." If there be one case requiring more delicacy than another, it must be in relation to the ministerial character. How impolitic, as well as abhorrent, for a Leader to return home and rehearse the transactions of a vestry, perhaps in the presence of children and servants; the rehearsal of which has a direct tendency to prostrate the ministry! Merely because the Leader has failed to accomplish a favorite object. 2. ITS EFFICIENCY. Suppose a case: a Preacher takes the spiritual charge of a Circuit of two thousand Members; his mode of conducting affairs is strongly disapproved by *two thirds* of the Society. Is it not in the power of the *two thirds* to make known their mind to him? Certainly. Will any one imagine that a Superintendent could resist the *private* expostulations of *thirteen hundred* Members? Impossible! "But," says the theorist, "this is arguing a state of things that never has been, and never will be, adopted." Has the theorist, then, any scriptural authority to apply any other check, in the open

neglect and defiance of a positive divine command? If this scriptural check has not been adopted, how does he arrive at the knowledge of its inefficiency? Is it not radical infidelity to dispute its power? And does he imagine that the adoption of other checks, unsanctioned by the sacred Scriptures, will supply "pith and nerve" to a man who has not courage to do as God commands him? The same subtle spirit, yea, master-spirit of the difficulty, will follow him even into the delegation-chamber, and stalk invisibly among the *newly made* legislators, and laugh to scorn their "PROTESTS AND RESOLUTIONS." The power of "public opinion" is a favorite topic of the man of rights: in what way is the power to be expressed? by one or two gentry armed with coats of steel to remove, by sudden assault, an evil which they had neither patience, courage, nor fidelity to prevent? Revert to what has already been stated on the subject of corruption in a Church. "It is not the result of *one act*, committed at *one time*, by *one person*; but, as the infinite congeries of particles deposited on the shore of a river, by the influx of the tides, form one mass or alluvium; so, the corruption of a Church or State, is the product of innumerable acts, by innumerable persons, and at innumerable times*." *No check in this world will prevent the process of accumulation but the scriptural check above-mentioned.* And, as all other evils emanate from this accumulation, Jesus Christ, reason, philosophy, unite in teaching the old doctrine, "STOP BEGINNINGS†." Societies are subjected to the same regimen as individuals; an intemperate man suddenly adopts a course of rigid abstemiousness; nature cannot bear the sudden re-action; death ensues. A spendthrift bounds to the opposite extreme of parsimony, and disallows himself the necessities

* Page 82.

† "Obsta principūs," *Horace*.

of life. Man hates the incommodious tax of incessant vigilance over little things; and seizes, with avidity, any process by which he may at once sweep away evils of insensible and protracted accumulation.

Hitherto, the subject of checks has been discussed in its bearings on the Societies at large: but as the great bulk of the Connexion has neither leisure nor means of acquiring all that knowledge of government *generally*, and of Methodism *especially*, requisite to apply judicious checks and expostulations; the Societies consign this duty to the faithful discharge of the vestry-men throughout the whole Body. The vestry-machinery of Methodism will never move well, where there is a very imperfect knowledge among the Leaders &c. of the great principles of Methodism. To know Methodism well is not the work of a day! the most difficult language in the world, with all its idioms and inflexions, may be attained sooner than a thorough knowledge of Wesleyan Methodism; but, when known, nothing more grand, nothing more simple! yet sufficient may be acquired by every Leader to guide him on most of the questions submitted to his sanction or rejection. Unfaithfulness in the vestry cannot be redressed by any plans of reform whatever. A vestry-man ought to be *constant in attending, faithful in speaking, and resolute in voting*; and no evil in a church has ever been strengthened, unless a general disregard to these three duties has preceded. "But I have voted" says an objector "and it is of no use." Vote again; blow the rams horn again; if your cause is good, and the voice of the Almighty is in your favor; the walls must come down. The continual dropping of water will wear away stones*! "But my friends desert me in

* "Quid magis est durum Saxo, quid mollius undâ?
"Dura tamen molli saxa cavantur aquâ."

the time of need ;" the Lord help you and your friends too, for the same difficulty will follow you, as certainly as the shadow follows the substance, in any plans you may adopt to remodel the constitution. But if you speak and vote from a conviction of judgment, you will have, at least, the testimony of an approving conscience, though your vote may stand alone*. "But the Preachers always contrive to enlist a few rich men on their side." This charge is coming to close quarters, and demands special investigation. 1. *The moral quality and tendency of the measure must be steadily looked at.* If an enactment be favourable to the spiritual interests of the Connexion and of the world, it is immaterial to the quality of the measure, whether that law be framed by poor men or rich men ; by ministers alone, or by the laity alone, so long as the law is good. Wealth and talent may subserve to great good as well as to great evil, according to the qualities and tendencies of the measure on which that wealth and talent exert their influence ; and although Ecclesiastical History unhappily furnishes a far greater number of evil results than of good results from the combination of lay wealth and talent with ministerial influence, yet there is no circumstantial or moral necessity that evil must flow from such combinations ; on the contrary, the combination of lay wealth and talent, with ministerial influence, yet apart from secular purposes†, appears necessary to the final triumphs of the Gospel. II. *The uniform and conscientious votes of the vestry-men, must counteract any baneful influence resulting from the combination of two or three*

* "Why have you left our Society ?" said a man to his friend: "Because" replied he "I voted alone against a measure, and they all laughed at me, and I would not stand it any longer." What a capital vestry-man !

† Vide, subsequent remarks on the "Deed of Declaration."

wealthy and talented men. The intrinsic value of a vote is always the same; its relative or circumstantial value is susceptible of indefinite augmentation, according to the juncture of affairs, calling forth its aid. The last vote is of no more *intrinsic* value than any one of the preceding votes; though in a critical emergency its value may be more conspicuous, yet that increased value is indebted to the former votes; in the same way as the lower courses of bricks in an edifice equally contribute to the elevation of the structure. Cases frequently occur when ONE vote turns the scale in very important affairs*. The term vote, from VOTO, to wish, to desire, &c. ought unquestionably to express the true mind of the voter; and whether that vote be withheld or misapplied, through intimidation, ma-

* "A very important constitutional question was debating" (*in the Irish House of Commons, prior to the Union*.) "between Government and the opposition; a question, by the bye, at which my English Reader will probably feel surprised; namely 'as to the application of a sum of £60,000, then lying unappropriated in the Irish Treasury, being a balance after paying all debts and demands upon the Country or its establishments.' The numbers seemed to be nearly poised, although it had been supposed that the majority would incline to give it to the King, whilst the opposition would recommend laying it out upon the Country; when a Member wanted to force into the House in his undress, in dirty boots and splashed up to his shoulders. The Speaker could not oppose custom to privilege, and was necessitated to admit him! It proved to be Mr. Tottenham, of Ballycarny, County Wexford, covered with mud and wearing a pair of huge jack-boots! Having heard that the question was likely to come on sooner than he expected, he had, (lest he should not be in time) mounted his horse at Ballycarny, set off in the night, ridden nearly sixty miles up to the Parliament-House direct, and rushed in, without washing or cleaning himself, to vote for *the Country*. He arrived just at the critical moment! and critical it was, for the numbers were in truth *equal*, and his casting vote gave a majority of one to 'the Country' party." This anecdote could not die while the Irish Parliament lived; and I recollect 'Tottenham in his boots' remaining, down to a very late period, a standing toast at certain patriotic Irish tables."

Sir Jonah Barrington's Personal Sketches of his own Times.
Vol. I. p. 193.

lignity, or self-interest; the voter's dereliction of duty, *in every instance*, contributes its quota to the increase of that corruption, of which he has no right afterwards to complain. Ten thousand such acts occur in Society, and become ten thousand deposits to the stock of corruption, if corruption do exist, so that *corruption begins with the voter*. The voter, be it remembered, can never be passive; neutrality is impossible. The gaining party is to a certain extent indebted to him. In vestry-transactions FEAR perhaps operates, more than all other reasons collectively, to silence a voter. If the fear result from *doubt* as to the proper steps to pursue, from an imperfect knowledge of the question in its origin and bearings; such fear is more unfortunate than culpable: but if the fear be *that of man*, the subjects of that fear ought, at least, to keep silence out of the vestry. For, the two greatest evils that ever injured Methodism, are, 1. Unfaithfulness in the vestry. 2. Discontent out of the vestry. Much insincerity and guile have appeared in some publications on these points; the tendency of which is to insinuate that the Itinerant Preachers have intimidated men from expressing their mind on sundry measures. Fact and reason prove otherwise; for, on the supposition of a Preacher acting improperly, the vestry-man well knows that Itinerancy removes a Preacher, and the grievance will usually expire with the removal; but the layman of influence, resident in the same place with the aggrieved voter, is the man most able, if disposed, to inflict permanent mischief on the family, and circumstances of the humbler individual. Cases have occurred, even in Methodism, when an irritated gentleman, the *fac-totum* perhaps of some small Society, and to whom the Society may be under special obligations, has intimidated the little company by threats of withdrawal, &c. if *his* will be not consulted and pursued. The little family, rather than part with *his* help, and for the sake of peace,

comply with his wishes; until a Preacher, of some pith and nerve, seeing the prostrate attitude of the Church, says, "*and a begging we will go,*" and releases the Society from the thralldom of the local nabob. In many instances, the Preacher has been the Deliverer of a Society; which, under an isolated independency, must have continued in bondage, or have divided the Church. A difference of opinion subsists as to the mode of collecting the opinions of the vestry; whether by open vote, or by secret ballot. Much argument has been adduced on both sides. Vote by ballot has been employed on special occasions by the Conference, and even in circuit-vestries in a few instances. Ballot affords protection to men against a lay influence, rather than ministerial; and where circumstances combine to place a Society almost at the disposal of a few great men, ballot is unquestionably the most effective way of eluding personal recrimination and oppressive results. There are vast cruelty and injustice in laying upon the heads of Preachers the delinquencies and mischiefs of an irritated and divided Church, and sending them as scape-goats to some other Circuits; while certain residents ought to bear the moiety of odium, and yet the ministry, forsooth, must bear the whole!! Who does not see the cloven foot in all this? Theory upon theories may luxuriate like the fungus of a dunghill in endless variety; but no check, which does not arrest the concentrative tendency of power, will or can avail to any useful purpose. That check is provided*: stamped with divinity, delicacy, efficiency, and universality; and, therefore, the only salutary check existent. The substance of the argument is this: There is a natural tendency in religious power to concentrate and accumulate; then to become secularised or prostituted to

* St Mathew xviii. 15. 16. 17.

unscriptural purposes. This collusion leads to mal-administration; afterwards mal-administration advances to corruption; corruption soon appears in acts of oppression; oppression widens and deepens to take in all the enormities of persecution, which have tinged with crimson hue the pages of church-history: therefore, "no check against pastoral misrule, which does not accord with the spirit and precepts of Christ, can be available." It is highly incumbent on men professing godliness to meditate on these things, and to apply such checks as the Sacred Scriptures alone will sanction; remembering, also, that a limited good can only be defended to a limited extent, and, when conflicts arise, it is far better to abandon the measure altogether, though abstractedly good, than by pertinaciously defending it, to induce an evil far greater than would arise from the abandonment of the good purpose.

PROPOSITION XII.

THE OPPOSITION, DEEMED SALUTARY IN POLITICAL CONSTITUTIONS, HAS NO SCRIPTURAL WARRANT FOR ITS APPLICATION TO THE CHURCH OF GOD, AND SERIOUSLY RETARDS THE EXTENSION OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE Gospel knows nothing of a spiritual Whiggism; of a species of ecclesiastical engine-pump incessantly counter-acting one measure by another, to preserve in due equipoise what theorists term "THE BALANCE OF POWER." This is another of the many blunders those men commit who maintain the identity of civil with religious communities. It was argued PROP. I. that, "In civil society the rulers derived their existence from the people; but in religious society the people owed their existence to their teachers;" as the analogy fails in the outset, so a dissimilarity will be found in the means of preserving its purity, and of promoting its extension. Some of the apostolical epistles are specially directed to illustrate and defend the **UNITY OF THE BODY** against what moderns would deem a wholesome opposition; like as some who contend for the *necessity* of indwelling sin to keep the pump of godly sorrow at work, so resistance to "the powers that be," in all shapes and forms, is conducive to the spiritual weal of the church of Christ!! It is right and safe to presume, that as the great Head of the Church has sanctioned only one process, or check, by which ministerial misrule must be resisted, no other species of opposition could be available; or the sacred Scriptures

would not have preserved so profound a silence on a question involving the welfare, if not eternal salvation, of myriads of the human race. In farther discussing the proposition it is designed to point out some of the great peculiarities of the Methodist Polity, and mark their adaptation to extend the interests of the Church of Christ. At the basis of all, is the Deed of Declaration, which was enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery, and runs thus:

"DEED OF DECLARATION."

"Whereas, divers Buildings, commonly called Chapels, with a Messuage and Dwelling-House, or other Appurtenances, to each of the same belonging, situate in various parts of Great Britain, have been given and conveyed, from time to time, by the said John Wesley, to certain persons, and their heirs, in each of the said gifts and conveyances named, which are enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery, upon the acknowledgment of the said John Wesley, pursuant to the Act of Parliament in that case made and provided, UPON TRUST, that the Trustees in the said several Deeds respectively named, and the survivors of them, and their heirs and assigns, and the Trustees for the time being to be elected, as in the said Deeds are appointed, should permit and suffer the said John Wesley, and such other person and persons as he should, for that purpose, from time to time, nominate and appoint, might therein preach and expound God's holy word; and, upon farther trust, that the said respective Trustees, and the survivors of them, and their heirs and assigns, and the Trustees for the time being, should permit and suffer Charles Wesley, brother of the said John Wesley, and such other person and persons as the said Charles Wesley should for that purpose nominate and appoint, in like manner, during his life, to have, use, and enjoy the said Premises respectively for the like purposes aforesaid;

and, after the decease of the survivor of them, the said John Wesley and Charles Wesley, then upon further trust, that the said respective Trustees, and the survivors of them, and their heirs and assigns, and the Trustees, for the time being, for ever, should permit and suffer such person and persons, and for such time and times as should be appointed at the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, in London, Bristol, or Leeds, and no others, to have and enjoy the said Premises for the purposes aforesaid, &c. AND whereas, for rendering effectual the trusts created by the said several gifts or conveyances, and that no doubt or litigation may arise with respect unto the same, or interpretation and true meaning thereof, it has been thought expedient by the said John Wesley, on behalf of himself, as donor of the several Chapels, with the Messuages, Dwelling-Houses, or Appurtenances before-mentioned, as of the donors of the said other Chapels, with the Messuages, Dwelling-Houses, or Appurtenances to the same belonging, given or conveyed to the like uses and trusts, to explain the words, "*Yearly Conference of the people called Methodists,*" contained in all the said trust-deeds, and to declare what persons are Members of the said Conference, and how the succession and identity thereof is to be continued: now, therefore, these presents witness, that for accomplishing the aforesaid purposes, the said John Wesley doth hereby declare, that the Conference of the said people called Methodists, in London, Bristol, or Leeds, ever since there hath been any yearly Conference of the said people called Methodists, in any of the said places, hath always heretofore consisted of the Preachers and Expounders of God's holy word, commonly called Methodists Preachers, in connexion with, and under the care of the said John Wesley, whom he hath thought expedient, year after year, to summons to meet him in one or other of the said places of London, Bristol, or Leeds, to advise with

them for the promotion of the Gospel of Christ, to appoint the said persons so summoned, and the other Preachers and Expounders of God's holy word, also in connexion with and under the care of the said John Wesley, not summoned to the said yearly Conference, to the use and enjoyment of the said Chapels and Premises so given and conveyed upon trust for the said John Wesley, and such other person and persons as he should appoint during his life aforesaid; and for the expulsion of unworthy and admission of new persons under his care, and into his Connexion, to be Preachers and Expounders as aforesaid, and also of other persons upon trial for the like purposes; the name of all which persons so summoned by the said John Wesley, the persons appointed, with the Chapels and Premises to which they were so appointed, together with the duration of such appointments, and of those expelled or admitted into Connexion, or upon Trial, with all other matters transacted and done at the said yearly Conference, have, year by year, been printed and published under the title of the Minutes of the Conference. *And these presents further witness,* and the said John Wesley doth hereby avouch and further declare, that the several persons hereinafter named, to wit, the said John Wesley and Charles Wesley, Thomas Coke, of the City of London, Doctor of Civil Law, &c. &c. (naming ninety-seven others, with the names of the several Circuits in which they were stationed,) "These," says he, "have been, and now are, and do, on the day of the date hereof, constitute *the Members of the said Conference*; according to the true intent and meaning of the said several gifts and conveyances, wherein the words, "Conference of the people called Methodists" are mentioned and contained. And the said several persons before-named, and their successors for ever, to be chosen as herein-after mentioned, are, and shall for ever be construed, taken, and be *the Conference of the people called Methodists: never-*

theless, upon the terms, and subject to the regulations herein-after prescribed. 1. That the Conference shall assemble once a year, and that the time and place of holding every subsequent Conference, shall be appointed at the preceding one. 2. The act of the majority in number of the Conference assembled as aforesaid, shall be had, taken, and be the act of the whole Conference, to all intents, purposes, and constructions whatever. 3. That after the Conference shall be assembled, they shall first proceed to fill up all the vacancies occasioned by deaths, or absence, as after-mentioned. 4. No act of the Conference assembled as aforesaid, shall be had, taken, or be the act of the Conference, until forty of the Members thereof are assembled, unless reduced under that number since the prior Conference by death or absence as after-mentioned; nor until all the vacancies occasioned by death or absence, shall be filled up by the election of new Members of the Conference, so as to make up the number of one hundred; unless there be not a sufficient number of persons objects of such election; and, during the assembly of the Conference, there shall always be forty Members at the doing of any act, save as aforesaid, or otherwise such act shall be void. 5. The duration of the yearly assembly of the Conference shall not be less than five days, nor more than three weeks; and be concluded by the appointment of the Conference, if under twenty-one days; or otherwise the conclusion shall follow of course, at the end of the said twenty-one days; the whole of all which said time of the assembly of the Conference shall be had, taken, considered; and be the yearly Conference of the people called Methodist, and all such acts of the Conference during such yearly assembly thereof, shall be the acts of the Conference, and none others. 6. Immediately after the vacancies occasioned by death or absence, are filled up by the election of new Members as aforesaid, the Conference shall choose a Pre-

sident and Secretary of their assembly, out of themselves, who shall continue such until the election of another President or Secretary, in the next or other subsequent Conference; and the said President shall have the privilege and power of two Members in all acts of the Conference, during his presidency, and such other powers, privileges, and authorities, as the Conference shall see fit, from time to time, to intrust into his hands. 7. Any Member of the Conference absenting from the yearly assembly thereof, for two years successively, without the consent or dispensation of the Conference, and not being present on the first day of the third year's assembly thereof, at the time and place appointed for the holding of the same, shall cease to be a Member of the Conference, from and after the first day of the said third yearly meeting thereof, to all intents and purposes, as though he was naturally dead. But the Conference shall, and may dispense with, or consent to the absence of any Member from any of the said yearly assemblies, for any cause which the Conference may see fit or necessary, and such Members, whose absence shall be so dispensed with, shall not by such absence cease to be a Member thereof. 8. The Conference shall and may expel, and put out from being a Member thereof, or from being in connexion therewith, or from being upon trial, any person, a Member of the Conference, admitted into Connexion, or upon trial, for any cause which to the Conference may seem fit or necessary; and every Member of the Conference so expelled, and put out, shall cease to be a Member thereof to all intents and purposes, as though he was naturally dead. And the Conference, immediately after the expulsion of any Member as aforesaid, shall elect another person to be a Member of the Conference, instead of such Member so expelled. 9. The Conference shall, and may admit into Connexion with them, or upon trial, any person or persons whom they shall approve, to be Preachers and Expounders

of God's holy word, under the care and direction of the Conference; the name of every such person or persons so admitted unto Connexion, or upon trial as aforesaid, with the time and degrees of admission, being entered into the Journal or Minutes of the Conference. 10. No person shall be elected a member of the Conference, who hath not been admitted into Connexion with the Conference, as a Preacher and Expounder of God's holy word as aforesaid for twelve months. 11. The Conference shall not, nor may nominate or appoint any person the use and enjoyment of, or to preach and expound God's holy word in any of the Chapels and Premises given or conveyed, or which may be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, who is not either a Member of the Conference, or admitted into Connexion with the same, or upon trial as aforesaid, nor appoint any for more than three years successively to the use and enjoyment of any Chapels and Premises already given or to be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, except ordained Ministers of the Church of England. 12. The Conference shall, and may appoint the place of holding the yearly assembly thereof, at any other city, town, or place, than London, Bristol, or Leeds, when it shall seem expedient so to do. 13. And for the convenience of the Chapels and Premises already, or which may hereafter be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, situate in Ireland, or other parts out of the Kingdom of Great Britain, the Conference shall, and may, when, and as often as it shall seem expedient, but not otherwise, appoint and delegate any Member or Members of the Conference, with all or any of the powers, privileges and, advantages herein before contained or vested in the Conference: and all and every the acts, admissions, expulsions, and appointments whatsoever of such Member or Members of the Conference so appointed and delegated as aforesaid, the same being put into writing, and signed by such Delegate, or Delegates, and entered into

the Journals or Minutes of the Conference, and subscribed as after-mentioned, shall be deemed, taken, and be the acts, admissions, expulsions and appointments of the Conference, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever, from the respective times when the same shall be done by such Delegate or Delegates, notwithstanding any thing herein contained to the contrary. 14. All resolutions and orders touching election, admissions, expulsions, consents, dispensations, delegations, or appointments, and acts whatsoever of the Conference, shall be entered and written in the Journals or Minutes of the Conference, which shall be kept for that purpose, publicly read, and then subscribed by the President and Secretary thereof for the time being, during the time such Conference shall be assembled; and when so entered and subscribed shall be had, taken, and received, and be the evidence of all and every such acts of the said Conference, and of their Delegates, without the aid of any proof; and whatever shall not be so entered and subscribed as aforesaid, shall not be had, taken, received, or be the act of the Conference, and the said President and Secretary are hereby required and obliged to enter and subscribe as aforesaid, every act whatever of the said Conference. Lastly, Whenever the said Conference shall be reduced under the number of forty Members, and continue so reduced for three yearly assemblies successively; or, whenever the Members thereof shall decline or neglect to meet together annually for the purposes aforesaid, during the space of three years, that then, and in either of the said events, the Conference of the people called Methodists shall be extinguished, and all the aforesaid powers, privileges, and advantages shall cease; and the said Chapels and Premises, and all other Chapels which now are, or hereafter may be settled, given, or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, shall vest in the Trustees for the time being of the said Chapels and Premises respectively, and their successors for ever, UPON TRUST, that

they, and the survivors of them, and the Trustees for the time being, do, shall, and may appoint such person and persons to preach and expound God's holy word therein, and to have the use and enjoyment thereof for such time, and in such manner as to them shall seem proper.

Provided always, that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend to extinguish, lessen, or abridge the life-estate of the said John Wesley and Charles Wesley, or either of them, of and in any of the said Chapels and Premises, or any other Chapels and Premises wherein they, the said John Wesley and Charles Wesley, or either of them, have now, or may have, any interest or estate, power or authority whatsoever. *In witness* whereof the said John Wesley hath hereunto set his hand and seal, the twenty-eighth day of February, in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith and so forth, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty four."

"JOHN WESLEY."

This is a most extraordinary document, to which perhaps the History of the Church of Christ cannot supply its parallel. Three of the most eminent counsellors assisted its construction under the eye of Mr. Wesley; and all of whom undoubtedly being under the eye of Him who "worketh all in all." The first and most important result of the Deed of Declaration is this: *it places the civil power, in reference to Methodism, just where it should be placed*; and, in this respect, the "Deed of Declaration" differs materially from TOLERATION. Toleration protects *men*, and *men ONLY*; by the Deed of Declaration the civil power protects not only *men* but their *principles*. The Founder of Methodism committed the guardianship of

Methodism to the British government, yet without that government having any share in its internal economy. Instead of the Church succumbing to the state, the civil power subordinates itself to Methodism; that is, as Methodism rallies round the King and Constitution, so the King and Constitution defend Methodism. It is true, protection is afforded to other sects by the State; but not *in the sense* and *to the extent*, enjoyed by the Wesleyan Societies. Mr. Wesley designed to perpetuate and extend the principles of a pure Church as far as his knowledge and influence could go; and his design was specially secured in the Deed of Declaration, by which *one hundred* men could annually confer, under British protection, on the best means of extending the Gospel of Christ. It is the Deed of Declaration that gives **UNITY** to the character, legislations, and workings of Methodism in every quarter of the globe; yet no statesman sits in its council or overawes its decisions; by the Deed of Declaration the **SAME** doctrines are taught in more than four thousand Chapels, and must be taught therein, whether or not the Preachers and Trustees wish otherwise. In the conflicts arising in an Independent Church, no Deed of Declaration interposes to settle the disputes as to the appropriation of its public sanctuary. If the orthodox turn heterodox there is no redress, where the trust is hereditary as to person, but makes no legal provision for the perpetuation of principles. The case of Methodism is widely different. If there are eleven Trustees to a Chapel, ten of whom choose to embrace any tenets not Methodistical, the eleventh man can protect that pulpit from the grasp of the ten apostates. The Conference itself has no legal existence, longer than pure Methodism exists, for the Deed of Declaration maintains its legal specification on the doctrines inculcated in the writings of Mr. Wesley. On the supposition of the Conference introducing a *new* order of things; the same act which relinquished the great principles of Methodism,

would also let go their hold upon every Wesleyan Chapel throughout the world, built on the Conference-plan. A late decision of the Lord Chancellor sets this matter at rest; "where the congregation of a Chapel become divided in opinion among themselves, it is not in the power of the majority (unless such a power is specially reserved to them) to alter the original objects of this Institution, or the doctrines originally intended to be preached; but, that for the purpose of deciding between the parties, the court must consider solely what were the original objects of the Founders of the Institution*."

The Deed of Declaration, and the Chapel Tenure should ever be taken in connexion with each other. By the *former*, the Conference maintain an ascendancy over any local misrule, faction, or seizure; and are legally invested with the right of *conducting* the worship of God: by the *latter*, the people can resist any heresies which a degenerate priesthood might otherwise attempt to introduce. A Trustee, therefore, of a Chapel, held on the Conference-plan, possesses higher prerogatives than perhaps any other man in the kingdom. He can publicly interrupt a Wesleyan Minister in his public preaching, if that Minister innovates on the Methodist doctrines†, without incurring legal penalties. This is a power which neither premier nor metropolitan dares to exercise. As the Deed of Declaration supplies the Conference with only a *conditional* existence, and not an *absolute* one; how absurd, as well as false, are the apprehensions of those who portend from Methodism, the enormities which once disgraced the Roman

* Methodist Magazine, 1825, page 45.

† A case of the public interruption of a Methodist Preacher, by a Trustee, occurred at S..... some years ago.

Catholic hierarchy. "There is a subject of vast magnitude and importance relative to the Methodist Connexion, on which those who are most immediately concerned are not properly informed,—I mean the doctrine of *Trusts*, including the office and duty of *Trustees*, and the property and privileges of *those* for whom they are in trust. The Chapels among the Methodists are generally settled on what is called the *Conference-plan*. This is a mode of settlement, suited to the peculiar circumstances of the people described; and, in its *form*, perfectly accordant with the principles of law relative to such trusts; and, consequently, may be safely relied on, as a proper legal and efficient mode of settlement especially where the Trust-deeds drawn up after this form refer, as they always should, to the *Deed of Declaration* enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery, which has been repeatedly recognized in law, and on the ground of which most important decisions have been made in favour of the people, whose property or privileges have been invaded either by *Trustees*, who, ignorant of their office, have imagined themselves *proprietors* instead of guardians, or by *lawless men* who put forth the hand of oppression and wrong against the property and privileges of their neighbours*. But, that we may clearly understand the subject, it is necessary to define the term *Trust*, and the executive or confidential persons called *Trustees*. *TRUST* is a charge received in confidence, on the behoof and for the use of the person or persons who commit it, and of which, according to the specified provisions, an account must be rendered. *TRUSTEE*, a person to whom, in perfect

* Several cases of unjust seizure of Chapels occurred during the conflicts of 1797, the British judicature however recognized the *Deed of Declaration* and the *Chapel Tenure*; and the Chapels were of course restored. Similar acts and results occurred in Ireland a few years ago.

confidence, a charge is committed, for the behoof and use of another. The nature of such trust or charge at once shows, that the Trustee is *no proprietor*; and has no personal legal interest in the charge or deposit committed to his keeping. The charge he has received, he keeps in behoof of him from whom he has received it, and whose representative he is: but he has no right over it, no personal legal interest in it, for as much as it is a *trust*; it is not a *donation*, or gift; it is not of his *emption*, or *purchase*; and for it he has given up no *valuable consideration*: therefore, it is not his, as he has it not in any of those ways, in which it can be his legal property; viz. *donation or purchase*. A and B have a joint property, C, which they wish to have preserved for their occasional use and profit. D and E are persons who are equally objects of their confidence, and to whose guardianship they agree to commit the property, C; in perfect confidence that they, fully knowing their mind and intent, will *preserve* that property, and *apply* it in the way agreed on. In this case, A and B are *Trusters*; D and E are *Trustees*; and C the *Trust* or thing confided. But, as it is possible that the successors of A and B may wish to claim this property, and apply it in a totally contrary way to the intent and purpose of the original *Trusters*, A B, or the *Trustees*, D and E; and their representatives may wish to alienate the property C, or use it in a different way from the original agreement; to prevent these evils, it is necessary that a *Deed of Trust* should be executed, which shall specify the *property* trusted, the *ends* for which it was trusted; the *Trusters* and the *Trustees*; and this being properly signed by the parties, and enrolled in Chancery, the trust is legally *conveyed*, the end of their conveyance legally specified, and the *Trustees*, by signing, legally *accept* the said *Trust*; thereby binding themselves to *preserve* and *apply* the property according to the specification in the deed, which

deed, by its enrolment, places the *Trusters*, *Trust*, and *Trustees*, under the direction, protection, and control of the Lord Chancellor. But the above reasoning proceeds on the ground, that the *Trust* comes into the hands of the *Trustees* unincumbered,—that there is no *debt* on the *Premises*, or that the *Trustees* are not bound to those debts. If there be debts, and the *Trustees* are responsible for those debts, they should have a clause or clauses inserted to enable them, with consent of the District-Meeting and the Conference, to raise the monies necessary to cover those debts. If the proceeds of the *Premises*, *e. g.* pew-rents, &c. are not sufficient to pay the interest of the money, they should have authority to call on the *Preachers*, and, through them, the *Society* of the place to come forward to their help;—if this help be not afforded, or if it be found insufficient, they should have a right to appeal to the next *Conference*; and if, in the course of twelve months, the *Conference* does not, or will not, find out effectual means of help, they should be empowered by their deeds to mortgage, or even (giving the *Conference* proper premonition of the sale) *sell* the *Premises* to pay off those *debts*. For as *Trustees* can have *no property* in their trust, so they should sustain no *loss*, nor be accountable for any thing, but the *safe-guardianship* of the trust, and its regular application to the *end* or *use* specified in their deed: and to *that end*, and for *that use* only. Thus the *Trusters* are satisfied, the *trust* kept safe, and the *Trustees* covered from all responsibility in reference to debts or incumbrances upon the premises. There is only one case more on this subject that requires to be considered:—if the *Trustees* themselves incur debts by alterations, additions, improvements, or by whatever names they may be called; then they are to be considered as *personally* responsible for those debts; and, if it appear that such *alterations*, &c. have rather *injured* than *improved* the property, they should be,

and in law are, bound to make good the damages, even to the restoration of the premises, or subject of trust, to their original state. But every case of this nature, may be prevented by *advice and counsel*. If alterations, additions, and improvements of any kind be judged necessary, then let the matter be laid before the *Quarterly Meeting* of the Circuit; and if necessary, carried on to the *District Meeting*; and even from that to the *Conference*; and what is judged *necessary* to be done, let it be by the *general consent*; and then let the Trustees be requested to *execute* what has been *agreed on*, the Meeting binding itself to raise the *necessary expenses*; or empowering the Trustees to *borrow* money upon the Premises, that they may be indemnified: but where there is an *existing debt*, no more money should be borrowed on any account whatever. And in no case should Trustees themselves ever make any alterations. They have neither right nor authority so to do, unless specified in their Trust-deed, and the deed that provides for such arbitrary alterations must be injudicious and foolish in the utmost extreme*." Much pains have been taken by Anti-Methodists to alienate the affection and shake the stability of Methodist-Trustees; by intimating that their office involves them in RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT PROPERTY; and that the Conference hold POSSESSION WITHOUT COST. There is a strong mixture of truth and error in this allegation; and in the sense intended by Anti-Methodists, it is *false, dishonorable, and injurious*. I. *The Chapels throughout the Connexion have been professedly undertaken on the most prudent and economical erection*. The language of Conference on this point, has been one reiterated series of cautions†; and affords a triumphant refutation of that vile

* Methodist Magazine, 1828, page 668.

† See, page 118; &c. *supra*.

calumny, that imputes to Conference a special interest in the multiplication of Chapels. Mr. Wesley's rule was, "two thirds of the money must be raised before the building is commenced;" and, though, Mr. W. himself, and the Conference, after his death, did not always absolutely enjoin the specific amount; yet they INVARIABLY required an assurance from the parties, that the resources were adequate to meet the direct and collateral expenses of the building, without diminishing their proper quota of help to the common cause. And some Preachers can well remember, and perhaps feel two, the public censure inflicted on them by the Conference, for not more resolutely discountenancing the misplaced ardour of some Societies. Three circumstances have contributed to the embarrassment of many Trustees. 1. The facility of borrowing money has been deemed a providential opening. No such thing; the investment of money in a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel is as good and valid as a government-security. If the lender will lend his money *without interest*, the borrowers may deem it a providential opening. This facility, however, has stimulated many to build who have not duly considered the means of refunding the debt, if called upon. Chapels built in FAITH must be paid for by WORKS. 2. The numerous items requisite to complete and "beautify" the structure, seriously augment the original estimate. If this be a sin, Methodist Trustees are not "sinners above all the Gallileans;" for scarcely a private gentleman can be found whose "snug little cot" has not cost as much to rusticate and beautify, as would have erected a goodly mansion. The maxim, "Don't spoil the thing for a trifle," has, in some places, almost irreparably spoiled the cause of God by involving the Trustees and Society in heavy responsibilities they were unable to meet. Here, again, the Conference is honorably exonerated: "Beware of building expensive Chapels," say they in their Minutes repeatedly. 3. The

depreciation of property has seriously affected many Trustees. Many of the Chapels were erected during the long war from 1802 to 1815, when materials, labour, &c. rose to an exorbitant value. At the termination of the war, a great revulsion in property, &c. took place, but the responsibilities continued unmitigated. The effects of this depreciation have not subsided; neither will they subside for several years to come. Every Chapel, thus critically placed, ought, without delay, to establish its own local *sinking-fund*, by weekly contributions, to be applied *solely* to the liquidation of the *debt*, while the pew-rents, quarterly collections, anniversary sermons and chapel-fund grant, are applied to the INTEREST and CURRENT EXPENSES. The capital value of a sinking fund consists in the accelerated power, or compound decreasing series, by which its influence and effect are manifest*. That Trustees and Societies, where Chapels are thus involved, (and such cases are too numerous,) should manifest a pasty apathy and indifference is truly astonishing, and is little short of a vicious criminality. Every year's neglect *increases* the difficulty, and as a pay-day must soon or late arrive; who ought to pay? The Conference, who have done their utmost to prevent imprudent erections? No! Neither reason nor Scripture demands of the Conference, help for those who will not exert themselves. In every stage of the argument, and indeed in the whole history of Methodism, the responsibilities of Trustees, as required by the Constitution, do not place the comfort, peace, and property of the Trustees in any jeopardy whatever. Much has been said relative to distressed Chapels;

* This decrease may be thus illustrated: Suppose a man undertake a journey of eight miles; to walk *four* miles the first hour, *two* miles the second hour, *one* mile the third hour, &c. when would he complete his journey? NEVER, NO NEVER!! The ratio may vary, but the decreasing principle is the same.

but whoever will bear in mind the depreciation of property, caused by circumstances above-mentioned, will be surprised that the proportion of distress has been so small, when it is recollected there are about *three thousand* Chapels in Great Britain alone. Yet great exertion must be made by the localities thus embarrassed, or the progress of the work of God will be seriously retarded. The *essential* responsibilities of a Methodist Trustee bear no proportion to the high honor which the Almighty confers on him, by rendering him an important part of that apparatus which God has eminently crowned with his blessing: and, for the *circumstantial* responsibilities, which imprudence may have appended thereto, neither Conference nor the system ought to be calumniated.

As the *Deed of Declaration*, the *Chapel-Tenure*, and *voluntary supplies* conjointly constitute an ample guarantee for the perpetuation of pure Methodism; and thereby apostasy is rendered impossible without the Societies being consentaneously accessory: the incessant baiting at the Conference, concerning matters confessedly trivial and subordinate, must necessarily sink them in the esteem of the religious world, and proportionately enfeeble their operations on the unregenerate part of the great human family. The Church of Christ has never yet had a fair opportunity of displaying its amazing power; and because former Churches have degenerated, the Wesleyan Constitution has been the subject of continual jealousy and scorn. Indeed, to a candid and impartial spectator, the fact of more than one thousand ministers being dependent on voluntary supplies, yet issuing commands and exercising prerogatives authoritatively, must argue a perfection in the organization of Wesleyan Methodism, to which History can supply no parallel. And who can legitimately deny the right of Conference to assume the pastoral care of the

Wesleyan Societies? The New Testament merely supplies general principles of Church order and government, and every thing else is inferential; and the arguments which go to deny the right of the Conference to exercise spiritual government on scriptural principles, would also repudiate their ministry altogether. Throughout all the preceding Propositions, the great constitutional principles of Methodism have been illustrated and defended; without any reference to local disputes, or to individual acts either of people or preachers. And though Methodism bears evident traits of divine impress and guidance; there are several circumstances connected with the future prosperity and advancement of the Connexion, adapted to awaken the deepest solicitude in the breast of every true Methodist. Amidst the *numerical* increase of the Societies, and enlarged revenue of its Institutions; the *ratio of increase* of Members is declining. In Table II. is calculated the *centesimal ratio* of increase, which unquestionably is the most correct mode of estimating the internal energy of the Constitution. In 1765, the Minutes first appeared in their complete form; and have been regularly issued from that period to the present time. From the year 1765 to 1797, embracing thirty-two years, the average increase of Members in Great Britain has been *seven per cent.* each year; from the year 1797, to the present time, embracing also a period of *thirty-two* years, the average increase of Members in Great Britain has been only *three and a half per cent.* each year. Had the ratio continued undiminished from 1765 to the present time, the number of Members in Great Britain would now have been *four hundred and seven thousand seven hundred and seventy-five*, instead of two hundred and forty-five thousand one hundred and ninety-four. It is true, Methodism never had larger and more respectable congregations; and the augmentation of the Missionary revenue exceeds all sanguine expectations, yet these are

aspects favorable to Christianity *generally*, than to Methodism *especially*. When a stone falls on an even surface of water, numerous waves are formed in concentric circles around the centre or point of entrance; the more remote is the circumference described from the centre, the feebler is the undulation though the circle is larger. Many, both Preachers and people have been lulled and soothed, by the numerical increase, into a notion of an imperishable and immutable quality in Methodism; but, as it is with individuals, so it is with corporate bodies; their vigour and continuance depend on the unceasing attention to the means of former advancement. As these remarks are not made without serious mature thought, and are given with a view to be rendered salutary, it is hoped they will be received with candour. Whether the moral energy of Methodism be less potent than in former years, or that christian communion is not so obligatory or advantageous as orthodox divines would feign inculcate upon mankind, it is not the province of this work to discuss. These sheets are designed simply to illustrate and defend the great principles of the Wesleyan Polity, and to prove that these great principles are neither contrary to reason or revelation. Some account for the declining ratio, by the increase of other denominations, which conjointly diminishes the unprofessing or irreligious bulk of the British population; this, however, will not sufficiently account for the decline; as the population of the British Empire, according to the late census, accelerates so as to require ere long the special attention of political economists.. It is certain that the disposition, prevalent in late years, of subjecting religious governments to the principles of "natural rights" is prejudicial to christian communion; when those "rights" are grounded on the ruin or neglect of a positive divine injunction. Strictly speaking, there are no civil or natural rights at all in a christian community, possessed either by

Preachers or people ; by the instructors or the instructed. The Church is the habitation or temple of the living God, wherein the *jus divinum*, or divine right pervades every part and merges all human rights. The Minister possesses a divine right to fulfil his ministry, neither adding to, nor detracting from, his sacred mission. The members are under a divine right or obligation not to introduce any elements of government unsanctioned by divine authority. In PROP. III. the directing sway of the Wesleyan Connexion was proved by *Scripture*, the *Minutes*, *reason*, *necessity* and *fact*, to be vested in the Ministry ; subject to the divine check or restriction above-mentioned. The Holy Scriptures uniformly discountenance the idea of the Church of Christ constituting a contract between Preachers and people. How can the exhibition of the Christian graces of a Church be negotiated into a contract ? Contracts know nothing of divine obligation, in the popular sense of the term, and therefore cannot apply to the Church of Christ wherein discretionary powers are so frequently required ; where the divine command to preach the Gospel and to rule the Church, demands the endless exercise of judgment which no contracts or statute-rules can embody. That members are under special obligations to their Ministers to receive their instructions will be seen by the following texts, Deut. xvii. 9. 10. 11. Thou shalt come unto the Priests, the Levites, and enquire ; and thou shalt do according to the sentence which they shall show thee ; according to the sentence of the law which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do ; thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand nor to the left. 1. Sam. ix. 9. 2. Chron. xx. 20. "Believe his prophets so shall ye prosper." Ch. xxx. 22. Mat. ii. 7. "The Priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts." John viii. 47. "He that is of God heareth God's words." Matt. xxiii.

2, 3. "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, all therefore whatsoever they bid you do, that observe and do." Luke x. 16. "He that heareth you, heareth me," Matt. x. 40. John xiii. 20. 1 Cor. xi. 1. "Be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ;" xvi. 16. "Submit yourselves to such as have addicted themselves to the ministry, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth." Heb xiii. 7. "Remember them which have rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls; as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable unto you." 2. *To esteem and love them.* 1. Cor. iv. 1. "Let a man so account of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the mysteries of God." 2. Cor. viii. 24. "show a proof of your love." Gal. vi. 14. "Ye received me as an angel." 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. "Know them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." Phil. ii. 29. Lamentations iv. 16. "The Lord will no more regard them, they respected not the person of the Priests, they favoured not the Elders." Math. x. 16. "He that despiseth you, despiseth me." 1. Thess. iv. 8. "He that despiseth, despiseth not men, but God, who hath given unto us his Holy Spirit." In contravention of the opinion of every lay-delegation theorist, a *Delegate and a Minister are not equal men*; the employment, character, consecration, and piety of the latter, are assumed as the greater; that it should be so, is the voice of reason and of God. The term Delegate is not, in the present instance, restricted to one who repairs to the scene of Conference-debates, to share in its deliberations &c. but is applied to any on whom devolves the duty of advancing the interests of the the Church of Christ, by his influence, advice and agency in the ordinary vestries; whether Trustee, Leader, or Steward. In proportion to the indistinctness or forgetful-

ness of the divine mission of the Ministers of Christ will be the indifference manifested to their sacred pastorship. "Equal claims" know nothing of that view of a Christian Church which the sacred Scriptures impart. The laws of the Church of God emanate FROM God, are administered by HIS authority, and directly tend TO him. The Old Testament dispensation invested the sacerdotal character with exalted privileges, distinguished benefits, and sacred duties; and the New Testament extended, not limited, its sacred functions and prerogatives. Every circumstance, though trivial in itself, which enfeebles or beclouds our perception of the divine authority and mission of an "ambassador for Christ" should be regarded with the greatest caution. The petitioning for Preachers is a practice hardly suited to the genius of Christianity; at least in the manner now practised over the whole Kingdom; scarcely a Circuit is exempt. Petitions were originally rare, and grounded on some PROVIDENTIAL occurrences, and not on the TALENTS of the Preacher. The prevalency of the habit neutralises the peculiar good contemplated by petitioning. The fancy, and vanity of petitioners, may be occasionally gratified, but the distribution of the talent must be subjected to some general law. There cannot be ELECTION WITHOUT REPROBATION, and the reiterated and stale objection "He may be a good man, but not a popular Preacher," has, in hundreds of instances, wounded the feelings of some of the holiest men in the Connexion. This evil is considerably aggravated by the practice of some Circuits rejecting men on account of their age; and yet make no exertions to augment the revenue of the Auxiliary Fund*. This is as humane and saga-

* If the Preachers were to withhold their subscriptions to the Legalized Fund, the stock would be to a penny, distributed among the claimants in less than five years. In the last year the claims reduced the capital nearly one thousand pounds!!

cious as a late Member of Parliament who voted *for* a standing army, but voted *against* the supplies ! The Conference have very honorably recognized the claims of age, by enacting a law which provides them with suitable Circuits, before any junior preachers are stationed*. And ought it not so to be ? But, “ there arose another Pharaoh which knew not Joseph.” The mind of Conference on the subject of petitioning for preachers has been thus expressed : “ Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of the Father, and of Jesus Christ our Lord. We think it proper again to express our love to you, and to assure you that our heart’s desire and prayer is, that you may be saved. After a long Conference, in which the greatest pains have been taken, not without constant prayer to God for counsel and direction, we have done our best in all the appointments of the Preachers. We have not only paid the greatest attention to the wishes of our dear people, from whom *regular* petitions were received through the Quarterly Meetings, but have likewise met, as far as in our power, (though to our great hinderance,) the views of those who have daily written to us during our sitting. But will our dear people permit us to speak to them the truth in love ? In such a great work as ours, it cannot be but that some circuits have not precisely every Preacher they wished to have. We have consulted the particular requests of each Circuit, but under the obligation of a superior duty : we have uniformly paid undeviating regard to the interests of the whole body ; and this, we trust, under the superintendence and direction of God. May HE sanction our labours with his blessing, and thus afford the most desirable evidence of his divine approbation ! You will permit us with the greatest tenderness to intimate to

* Minutes, 1800.

you, that we are apprehensive, that the stationing of the Preachers in Conference will meet with insuperable difficulties, if the manner of petitioning, and *particularly of writing to the Conference, even to the last day of their sitting, be persisted in.* We do not desire you to make no expression of your wishes; but the positive, not to say unkind terms, in which the Conference have been this year addressed, have abundantly multiplied our difficulties; and, we have reason to fear, have, upon the whole, rendered the stations of some of the brethren less satisfactory than they otherwise would have been. Recollect, dear brethren, we are one body. The Preachers and the people have one interest. Let us, therefore, as far as possible, sacrifice our partial wishes for the sake of the general good. Let us recollect that nothing can compensate for the want of love. For the honor of God, for the sake of Christ, if you regard the welfare of Methodism, do not persist in urging such measures, as must, in the event, destroy our Itinerancy*.”

This extract needs no comment, and is a triumphant refutation of that charge which insinuates that the Conference have carried on an under-current negotiation to stimulate the petitioning system. The ratio of increase of Members being on the decline, is fatal to that argument which urges the petitioning system to be in favour of advancing the Connexion. Are not the Circuits thus often placed in the most inviting aspects to the men of their choice? Are not innumerable offers annually made to arrange the Circuits to the wishes of the petitioned Preachers? So far from a previously intimate knowledge and correct estimate of the fitness of the intended Preacher always guiding the choice of the people, in many cases, there has been no knowledge of the man at all; and, in some instances, a Preacher's ac-

* Minutes, 1803.

acceptance or rejection has depended on one sermon!! To those who are distressingly solicitous for *popular* Preachers, one word of advice may be useful; treat a *good* man WELL, and they may rely upon having a *good* and *great* man soon afterwards. If the habit of petitioning were regulated by the man's *moral* worth, as well as by his intellectual caliber, the inconvenience would be materially diminished. The practice is also extremely hurtful to many junior Preachers. *Pulpit* prowess being deemed a more negotiable article, or passport, to eminence, and TO A GOOD CIRCUIT, than *pastoral* fidelity; the young man will cogitate and lucubrate, and push on at any rate, to accomplish his heart's desire. The young man is to be pitied! The unnatural voracity of a Methodist audience for novelty and variety; the mental voluptuousness, or theological confectionary, in which too many hearers delight in, have a stimulating effect on his mind; and, unless he has the felicity of itinerating with an able and experienced Superintendent, he is in constant danger of setting off his pulpit efforts with a frenzied brilliancy, at the expence of sound divinity. If the good old maxim of praying *more*, and petitioning *less*, were revived throughout the Societies, the great Head of the Church would be more pleased, the Conference would be less annoyed, and the work of the Lord would more abundantly prosper.

To return to the important subject of the *declining ratio*: Though Methodism has flourished amidst unmerited obloquy, and risen superior to the combined agency of powerful foes; yet, *past* stability and success afford a guarantee to *future* imperishability, no longer than first principles are steadily upheld and pursued. Perhaps a few Preachers and Members may be found, touchy as the sensitive plant, recoiling from the least intimation of future decrepitude. But other revivals have had their origin,

progress, and decay; and, it is lamentable, that, in most instances, before the expiration of half a century, the pure spirit of revivals has been diluted to the tastelessness of water. There are three features in Methodism, favourable to perpetuity. 1. The doctrine of Christian perfection; as taught by Mr. Wesley: "not as though" the Societies "had already attained, either were already perfect;" but, while "they follow after" and "walk by the same rule and mind the same thing;" while they do these things, they "shall never fall." 2. The Deed of Declaration affording civil protection, without civil interference, to one hundred Ministers in their *united* Counsel, or Conference; to extend the Redeemer's kingdom. Whoever will examine the Deed of Declaration must perceive the absurdity, as well as *legal* impracticability, of incorporating lay delegation with the Conference-sittings; for, if every Preacher and Member of the Societies were resolved to adopt a lay mixture into the Constitution, from that hour the Connexion would be legally defunct; the Chapel-Deeds would be null and void; and an expenditure of about twenty thousand pounds would be requisite to re-invest the Chapel-property in local, independent trusts; and, of course, Methodism, as framed and transmitted by the immortal Wesley, would be utterly obliterated. The Conference of 1797, which resisted Delegation, well knew the result of its proposed adoption, when they declared to the Societies that "Delegation would destroy Itinerancy," as legally permitted by the Deed of Declaration. It was a happy circumstance to Methodism, that the "proposal of 1769, to invest all the Chapels in a general trust, consisting of persons chosen out of the whole nation," was never adopted. It is impossible to say what the result would have been during the restless, feverish times of 1797; and though a British Court of Judicature would have recognized the conjoint

claims of the Chapel-Tenure and Deed of Declaration, in favor of Conference, as was done in several cases; yet had such a consolidated national trust existed, and that trust had been disposed to abuse their power after Mr. Wesley's death, (as once represented to Mr. W.) some of the leading principles of Methodism might have been sacrificed, or placed in imminent jeopardy, as the Conference would have found it very difficult to cope with so potent a lay aristocracy. The proposal of a general investment originated with Mr. W. but, from causes now impenetrable, it fell to the ground.

The Deed of Declaration supplies another important feature: the *tenth* clause, which closes up all access of the Societies to the Conference, re-acts on the Conference, and excludes them from attaching lay influence to their decisions. The Conference thus stands *isolated* before the world; an *exclusive* principle, like a boundary line, is thrown around them by the Deed of Declaration, "so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot, neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Thus circumvallated and inaccessible, a religious or pastoral government, unmixed by lay influence, it was, and is, and is to come, so long as Wesleyan Methodism exists. 3. The Chapel-Tenure perpetuates Methodism by making the trust two-fold. 1. *Of property*; 2. *of principle*; yet the trust is not hereditary. The son of a Trustee cannot become a Trustee by birthright or heirship. The claim is also conjoint: It is not *mine*; it is not *thine*; it is *ours*; that is, Preachers and people *indissolubly*, unless the Conference should cease to assemble: then, by the last clause of the Deed of Declaration, the Chapels become not the property of the Trustees, but the property of the Societies, for whose advantage the Trustees must then exercise the trust, and direct its spiritual services in lieu of the Conference, now supposed to be extinct.

Sufficient has been advanced to demonstrate the falsity of charging the *declining ratio* on the apostasy of Conference: its cause must be sought elsewhere; not in the renunciation of principle, but in certain acts, as intelligible as if written with a sun-beam. Those acts are none other than the local dissensions of the last twenty years on matters of confessedly trivial and minor importance; the obvious tendency of which must be to render Church-Communion less sacred and attractive to the view of the more intellectual portion of the *outward hearers*. It is not the design of this publication to moot any particular question of local litigation. The outward hearer admires the pulpit fidelity and talent of the Connexion, and is "in endless mazes lost" in trying to discover the truth and utility of petty broils; but the influx of Members is thereby to a great degree arrested. Shame ought to burn the cheek of those who stand as the guardians and directors of other Churches, yet make themselves partly to such transactions. If the same officiousness characterised their demeanour in their own neighbourhood, by entering the apartments of other families to settle occasional domestic broils; they would, *sans ceremonie*, be obliged to make a quick exit. If the *declining ratio* continue the next *thirty-two years* the same as the last thirty-two, the regulations of 1798 must be revived and enforced; "1. In future, we shall be under the disagreeable necessity to send them no more Preachers than they are able and willing to provide for, a *very few* Circuits excepted. 2. That, on this account, the smaller places in each Circuit, which can scarcely support the Preachers, while they are with them, must have less preaching, if not be wholly given up. 3. That where any Circuit has been divided, so as to render more Preachers necessary than the people are able to support, and especially where they cannot provide a house for a family, SUCH CIRCUITS MUST BE AGAIN UNITED. 4. That the grand reason

for the above regulations is *hard necessity**. Though the *declining ratio* need not discourage the Connexion, it may serve to arouse the energies of those Members who have sat unconcerned spectators of the ceaseless defensive warfare which the Conference have maintained; and to remind the Societies, they are under equal obligation to defend the system. Every year will render the duty more imperative and necessitous. A subtle and specious libertinism is rapidly moulding the professedly religious world into one unshapely, semi-infidel mass. The spirit of the times will not deliberately deny divine revelation with the effrontery which characterised Voltaire, Mirabaud, &c. but "civil rights" have so far usurped the dominion of revelation and conscience as to neutralise, to much *practical* purpose, the plainest commands of the Almighty, on the subject of pastoral governments. In avoiding Scylla, they fall on Charybdis; in striving to disarm priesthood of its power to persecute, they are rendering the ministerial character comparatively impotent; in rooting out the tares, the wheat is trodden down. The emissaries of Satan are carrying on a rifle-gun warfare against the armies of Christ, whereby the officers of the most High fall the marked victims, that the troops may be confounded and scattered. Before the Societies can rationally hope for any material augmentation; at least, for such an increase as a pure Christianity and a primitive Methodism would entitle them to warrant, several important acts must be promptly undertaken.

I. It is the duty of the Societies, in a general and spontaneous Manifesto, to announce to the world that the leading principles of the Wesleyan Polity, have the concurrence of their judgment and affection of their heart. The sooner

* Minutes, Vol. I. page 427.

this is done, the better; it has never yet been done, but matters are drawing to a crisis to require it. Let not the Societies be lulled by the syren-song of impregnable security. "THE ACCUSER OF OUR BRETHREN" is not yet "cast down!" and "let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself, as he that putteth it off." The restless activity of Anti-Methodists to disseminate mistrust among the Societies against their Pastors, must be counteracted by correspondent declarations of confidence. The Manifesto should be *spontaneous*; in which the Preachers should not have the slightest connexion or influence. It should be *general*; and then it would be effective. Like turning a river into the Augean Stables, the long accumulated mass of doubt and suspicion would at once be swept away. The lay part of the *Committee of Privileges* would perhaps constitute the best Directors of the concern; who could, with facility, supply the Circuit-Stewards throughout the kingdom, with the requisite forms and documents. The effect would be almost irresistible; the wavering would be established; the weak strengthened; the timid emboldened; the petulant silenced; Church Communion more appreciated, and the word of the Lord would run and be glorified.

II. *The vestry-men, throughout the Connexion, should possess a more systematic and copious access to the official documents of Wesleyan Methodism.* In most of the dissensions that have occurred, the great misfortune is that many of the combatants, on each side, have "talked without book." What the poet says of learning, may be truly applied to the knowledge of the Wesleyan Constitution:

"A little learning is a dangerous thing,
 Drink deep into the empyreal Spring,
 For shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
 But drinking largely, sobers you again."

This defective acquaintance which the Societies, in general, have of Mr. Wesley's character and writings, and of the proceedings of the Connexion, as detailed in the annual Minutes, places the Societies in a peculiarly unfortunate attitude, in cases of local disputes. In the paroxysm of grief or rage, each party flies to the Minutes, like a sick man consulting the "Domestic Medicine" of Buchan, Reece, or Graham. A morbid imagination fancies a complication of diseases, which previous patience and prudence might have prevented. If men will not be made wise, ought such men to complain of the results of their own ignorance? Every Circuit throughout the kingdom ought to possess one copy of Mr. Wesley's works, and one copy of the Minutes *seriatim*; of which one of the Circuit-Stewards, for the time being, might be curator. This arrangement would obviate every objection which a vestryman, in humble circumstances, would urge against the expense his office entailed upon him. These records would be the *property of the Circuit*; to which every Leader, Local Preacher, and Trustee, might have ready access. But who will take the trouble of studying the Methodist Polity? one in ten? one in a hundred? No; hardly one in a thousand has given himself any trouble about it. Will the culpably ignorant, then, have the modesty to be quiet if a dispute arise; the true merit of which their ignorance utterly disables them to decide? Some men, in trying to magnify their office, magnify their ignorance; indeed, how can it be otherwise, if men who have been Leaders, perhaps fifteen or twenty years have not spent as many hours in studying the system of Wesleyan Methodism? Let every Circuit, from this time, have the *standard Works of Methodism* in possession, *pro bono publico*; and then all reasonable objections would be obviated as regard want of information. Many persons have considered "a digested code of Methodist Laws," a great *desideratum* to

the Connexion. If the Conference act wisely, and as *they ought to act*, they never will publish any code of laws. Codes of laws, so termed, are pledges of future policy ; and no religious sect ought to involve itself in any pledge as to the prospective. Mr. Wesley never pledged himself how he should act in future ; he had more sense ; his guiding principle was to save souls ; to do good ; to spread truth, joy, and happiness, by every means, and in every place he could. Church-order, early prejudices, and human institutions were made to bend to this all-powerful principle of his character. Church-rituals, and Sectarian laws, though framed at first for valuable ends, may, by the change of events, not only lose their original value, but lie in direct opposition to the universal biblical law of **DOING GOOD**. The only enquiry of any moment in this place, is, whether the conduct and measures of the Wesleyan Conference, since 1791, prove a general departure from the principle which animated the breast of Wesley ; or, whether there is not presumptive evidence that Conference, “so far as circumstances would permit,” have rigidly adhered to original modes and forms ; and that the change of aspects, is ascribable to the current of events, and not to any deviation from Wesleyan principle. Methodist Laws, like the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet, are some *radical* or *immutable* ; others, *servile* or *mutable*. Recur to PROP. IV. p. 59. “Suppose a case : a table is covered with damask cloth : in the fabricating of that damask, the threads of the woof are, by a previous adjustment of the loom, so interwoven with the threads of the warp, as to bring out the intended configuration of the damask. The configurations may be made to vary, perhaps *ad infinitum*, with the *same warp and woof* ; but, in every case, the texture is one, and its durability or decay will be uniform throughout. The simile is not trivially or capriciously applied to Methodism ; but, in many important senses, illustrates the

true genius of the Wesleyan Constitution. Methodism has been compelled by the combined influence of uncontrollable events, to undergo different aspects or configurations; but, the warp and woof of its fabric; the grand characteristic principles, and designs of Methodism, have remained unchanged and unmutilated." Let the regulations be called, (what they really are;) Minutes and not Laws; let the Deed of Delaration, Chapel-Tenure, and Voluntary Supplies form the tripod of Methodism, and the motto "*Quocunque jeceris stabit*," will justly apply to the Constitution; IN WHATEVER WAY YOU THROW IT, IT WILL STAND; but let one foot of the tripod be broken, or taken out; and Methodism falls to the ground: let "civil rights" cajole Conference into the admission of lay delegation into the Body, and the Deed of Declaration becomes null and void: let the Deed of Declaration be taken away, and no *legal* provision is made for the perpetuation of Methodist doctrines, discipline, and itinerancy, in any of the Chapels. Let the Chapel tenure be indefinite, and vague as to the appropriation of the Sanctuary, and a Methodist Chapel may become a half-way house to Deism; as was the case in some of the edifices erected by the non-conformist divines.

The *stamina* of Methodism being thus secured; let the Conference alone, ye Diotrephesian scribblers! for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for souls' sake, for heaven's sake, let the Conference have elbow-room; and do not spoil Methodism with "vain philosophy and self-deceit." There is a thread entwined, by a gracious Providence, around the Conference, which their united prowess cannot break*.

* "Sunt certi denique fines,
"Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum."

The Preachers, *of themselves* cannot ruin Methodism, if they would: the Societies, *of themselves* cannot ruin Methodism, if they would. But the Preachers and the People may negotiate about matters, which, if carried, might strike a fatal blow to the Methodist Polity. The two halves of the scissors, above mentioned, when rivetted, may cut the thread. One word to those who, though they were never Members of the Body, "have nevertheless thought it incumbent to publish their thoughts to the world." Take the New Testament; read *every* line of the Minutes for the last seventy years; study the rise and progress of Methodism; **COLLATE THE THREE**: and then write the result. Compare the *second* writing with the *first*; and then lay "your hand upon your mouth, and your mouth in the dust."

III. *The spiritual intelligence of the Body should, by a systematic and ample diffusion of suitable helps, acquire a more exalted and powerful character.* Though the intelligence of the Connexion is far from being contemptible, yet it is susceptible of considerable augmentation. A Wesleyan Institute might easily be established in London, whose avowed object should be a more copious and economical diffusion of the *standard* writings of Methodism throughout the kingdom; to which every Circuit might be conveniently attached. It may be urged there is the Book-Room*; true, but the Book-Room does not embrace the purposes now contemplated. The establishment of portable and circulating Libraries, throughout all those

* In Table III. is given the Contribution to the Book-Room; strictly speaking it is not a contribution, as an equivalent is received in return; yet it serves to show that the taste for spiritual knowledge among the Societies is much too low; or that the Societies seek another market to the culpable neglect of this Institution.

Circuits, whose station and character closely resemble the Circuits, mentioned in Table I. would enrich the Societies with a most valuable increase of important knowledge. Suppose, for instance, it be intended to apply the suggestion to the Howden Circuit, containing 621 Members; the sum of *twenty-five pounds* is raised towards the formation of a circulating or transferable Library. The five largest Societies, viz. Howden, Armin, Newport, North-Cave, and Holme; might become five depôts, at each of which places books to the value of *five pounds* might be deposited, enclosed in suitable boxes. These boxes, numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, might, at intervals of about eight or twelve months, be exchanged between the respective places so that each box will have passed through the five places in about four or five years. If a *duodecimo* edition, printed and bound in a cheap and durable style, of such works as the Wesleyan Institute at London might deem expedient, were to stock the boxes, about two hundred and fifty readers might be supplied in the Howden Circuit. Persons of good repute, not Members, might have access to the books; and a Travelling Preacher, not Superintendent, might be considered the inspector of the whole, and employ such subordinate helps as the localities might need; the inspector being responsible to produce at the District, proper schedules or catalogues, so that no part of the stock shall be lost or injured. There is an immense number of young Members, of good natural endowments, resident in the second and third rate Circuits, for whom there is only very slender intellectual provision. About one hundred and seventy thousand Members in Great Britain are deprived of the means of acquiring much systematic mental culture, which this simple itinerant apparatus might readily supply. The number of boxes and depôts might be augmented or diminished as the circumstances and ability of the respective Circuits deemed

advisable*. The utility of the boxes, or depôts, would be greatly augmented by a short and judicious manual or vade-mecum of instructions, showing the best mode of using the books contained in the several depôts. This manual might be drawn up by three or four judicious Preachers, chosen by the Conference, and would be rendered incalculably beneficial to the Connexion at large. It is greatly questionable whether fifty Circuits throughout Great Britain have any provision at all for their respective Circuits. Illiterate piety may sometimes do much harm, as well as literate impiety; and it is highly incumbent on the vestry-men of the Connexion to make such provision as the advanced state of the Society imperiously demands. Very small contributions would be needful; the readers, by paying each half-a-crown annually, might secure a succession and variety, so requisite to keep up the zest and ardour for literary pursuits. In the farming Districts, how many thousands of Members, in humble circumstances, waste precious hours, especially in winter evenings, whose knowledge and character would be greatly meliorated by the establishment of depôts, managed by a London Institute. The hint is submitted to all whom it may concern.

IV. *The class-ratios, or weekly contributions of the Societies, demand a more punctual, conscientious, and efficient attention.* If it be true, that human instrumentality is associated with the divine prediction and agency, in reference to the salvation of a guilty world, and that the consecration of portions of worldly property forms a part of that great apparatus; the weekly contributions

* In conversing with young men in various country places I have frequently regretted their privations of a uniform and progressive course of study; their minds, having no adequate nourishment to supply the activity of their thoughts, often embark in schemes of wandering irregularity, subversive of salutary discipline.

to the cause of Methodism have never been so punctually and conscientiously regarded as their importance demands. That covetousness has an awful and extensive influence in withholding requisite supplies for the carrying on of the work of God, no man can deny who is conversant with his New Testament, and with Church History. Covetousness is placed amongst the *greatest* sins which man can commit: 1 Cor. v. 11. "I have written to you, if any one that is called a Brother, be covetous, &c. with such an one, no not to eat." Ephes. v. 3. "Covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." Col. iii. 5. "Mortify your Members, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Isa. lvii. 17. "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wrath, and smote him." Jer. xxii. 17, 18, 19. "Thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness; therefore, saith the Lord, they shall not lament him; he shall be buried with the burial of an ass." Ephes. v. 5. "No covetous man hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Covetousness appears to hold the same relationship to the *spread* of the Gospel, as unbelief holds to the *reception* of the Gospel; and, on this account, each is marked by the special abhorrence of the Almighty. Mr. Wesley's language is very strong on this point; "These money-lovers" says he, "are the pest of every christian society; they have been the main cause of destroying every revival of religion. They will destroy us, if we do not put them away. But how shall we know them without the miraculous discernment of spirits? 1. By their own confession. Tell any one alone, with all tenderness, 'I am to give an account of your soul to God; enable me to do it with joy. I am afraid you are covetous; answer me a few questions in order to remove that fear.' 2. By their fruits: for instance; a man not worth a shilling enters our Society; yet he freely gives a penny a week. Five years after-

wards he is worth scores of pounds. He gives a penny a week still. I must think this man covetous, whose beneficence does not increase in the same proportion as his substance increases." Though covetousness is awful in its tendencies, and numerous in examples; yet, many, whose contributions are much below what they OUGHT to advance, cannot be truly charged with covetousness. A really covetous man shutteth ~~up~~ his bowels of compassion; he feels no sympathies for the needy. Many hundreds of religious characters withhold their just quota, either through *want of thought*, or *want of method*; who, nevertheless, help very freely when they *see* misery. It cannot be denied, that in almost every Society throughout the Connexion, Members may be found, who think not, or care not, how a perpetually stationed ministry is to be supported. What is every body's work, too often becomes nobody's work, and the efficiency of the best system may be lost in a vague and impotent generality. Such thoughtless Members may derive salutary knowledge by studying the rise, progress, and enlargement of Societies in different places. How comparatively few the agents! but how resolute their zeal. Their works shall follow them, and their reward is with their God.

Want of method, perhaps conduces more to the withholding of efficient help than all other causes together. The best direction on this point is given in 1 Cor. xvi. 2. "*Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*" Though this passage primarily refers to "the collection for the saints," who were in a destitute state in Jerusalem; yet the instructions are admirably adapted to every system or institution, wherein pecuniary help is requisite to its perpetuity and enlargement. The verse notices I. *The ratio of contribution*: "as God hath

prospered him." II. *A periodical or regular observance:* "on the first day of the week." III. *An available resource:* "lay by in store." IV. *Prompt application:* "that there be no gatherings when I come." V. *Its universal obligation:* "Let EVERY one of you, &c."

I. *The ratio of contribution:* "as God hath prospered him." The capital defect of many consists in not arranging or distributing their income, so as to constitute the claims of the cause of God, an integral part or item of regular expenditure. In a well regulated household, all the varieties of food, raiment, utensils, &c. have their just proportions; according to the rank of the householder. If any serious reverses of fortune overtake him, *each* department of expenditure undergoes a just and proportionate retrenchment: the size or rental of his house; the quality of his raiment; the variety and expensiveness of his table; are all scrutinized and adjusted to a diminished income. He does not continue rich drapery and walk barefoot. Every thing is in due keeping or consistency. The most desirable habit and imperative duty of each Member of the Church of Christ are to throw in the claims of piety and mercy among the regular items of domestic expenditure; and not to suffer mere shoe-blackening, music, and tobacco, to hold a more fixed residence in a house, than the cause of the Redeemer! And yet this is the case with thousands of professors. They give, but without system or method; the duty is left to precarious fulfilment. The voice of woe, the cause of God, the wants of the heathen, may find him unprepared to contribute; he withholds, and is called covetous; though he deeply regrets at the same time his inability. A question here arises: What proportion of a man's income ought to be consecrated to spiritual and pious uses? The New Testament enjoins no specific ratio whatever. This is left to a man's own judgment,

yet it is of the utmost moment to consider the period of life, the temper of mind, the peculiar circumstances in which a judgment is formed and applied on so important a question; for scarcely one event of a man's life will produce greater results. A pure intention, fervent prayer, patient deliberation, judicious counsel, must combine to produce a wise decision; and no instance can be quoted wherein such decision, piously formed, and conscientiously pursued, did not produce the most valuable results to the character, circumstances, and habits of the individual. The ratio, or per centage, being determined, it will adapt itself to all the vicissitudes of the individual. His givings are not capricious, they are the product of a steady self-adjusting principle: having covenanted with his God, he knows the terms of his covenant; his judgment unites with his conscience and affection, to repel the clamors of covetousness, or the projects of ambition. He deems it sacrilege to appropriate God's money to secular purposes; he renders to God the things that are God's, by his deliberate consecration. He is also happily released from fear and doubt: from fear of hurting his circumstances, or neglecting the claims of justice; from doubt as to the propriety of the steps he pursues.

Perhaps the best period in which a pious man might settle the quota or ratio of his property for the cause of God and humanity, would be as soon as possible after his conversion. Gratitude, humility, love, zeal, then impress his heart in their most amiable and vigorous influences. His soul, docile and plastic as a child, will mould itself to whatever form his superior in wisdom and piety may recommend. Let his Leader affectionately explain the duty and advantage of assigning a distinct and specific portion of his income to pious purposes; in all probability the new convert will take the recommendation of his Lea-

der upon the precise ratio. Let him not be hasty ; let him think closely, and pray fervently for divine guidance. Having decided, let no temptation induce him to swerve to the right or to the left ; he will see his way more and more clearly ; his ear can be opened with perfect composure to the appeals of piety and philanthropy, and he can determine, with delightful facility, how far he can afford help. He is beforehand of the old heathen, "that the love of money increases just as money itself increases*." Having devised liberal things, by liberal things he shall stand.

II. *The periodical or regular observance*: "on the first day of the week." The ratio of contribution will derive its principle value from the steady punctuality of the deposits. Here, again, is a very hurtful habit, prevalent in the Wesleyan Societies, of neglecting to *PAY* or "*LAY BY*" weekly, what has been *rated* or *promised* weekly. Hundreds of pounds are annually lost to the Connexion by this irregularity. A Member in humble circumstances, engages to pay *two pence* weekly ; by absence or neglect he suffers heavy arrears to accumulate. He may possibly manage, by much effort and sacrifice, to discharge the arrears, but the gift is half spoiled by unpleasant associations ; and when such cases become reiterated, his mind is gradually estranged, and he ultimately abandons his connexion with those whom he once conceived to be the people of God. It most commonly happens, that Members, in respectable circumstances, meet in Class with poorer brethren ; the wealthy ought to pay *weekly* as well as the poor ; otherwise the distinction must be extremely painful and grating to the humbler Members. It would not be amiss for a Leader, when visiting absent Members, to re-

* "Crescit amor nummi, quantum ipsa pecunia crescit."

ceive from them their contributions ; unless he is thoroughly conscious that the Member actually "lays by" or deposits his accustomed contribution ; and so takes to his class, at his next attendance, what he had previously laid by or deposited. Methodism is fruitful in examples of very poor Members, many of whom are widows, who conscientiously lay by their little contribution ; and if all wealthier Members would "go and do likewise," Methodism would exert its influence over a much greater field.

III. *An available resource*: "lay by in store." When a man has certain deposits, the general purpose of which has been already settled, he feels no difficulty in so distributing the amount, as that all the institutions and ordinances of God shall have their just quota, according to the relative magnitude of their objects. Here, again, the man must be left chiefly to his own judgment. Two pious men may not view the *same* institution, in the *same* light, or with the *same* attachment. This dissimilarity is perhaps wisely ordered ; but the main object is attained ; there are deposits "in store," and the store is available to any pious purposes. The man no longer recognizes the store as his own ; it is God's, in a sense in which nothing else can be ; it is God's, by a sanctification, or setting apart ; and the sacrifice is ready at any hour to be offered on that altar which sanctifieth the gift.

IV. *Prompt application* : "that there be no gatherings when I come." In the second section was mentioned the utility of a punctual weekly deposit by the poorer Members. This will apply to the ordinary procedures of the Connexion. But when an extraordinary effort is requisite, such as the projection of a new enterprise, the revival or enlargement of an old institution ; the punctual weekly deposits of wealthier Members will be found of incalculable

importance. If it be true that the secret thoughts of every heart will be made manifest; is there not reason to fear, in the thousands of vestry-meetings held during the last eighty years of the existence of Methodism, that the opposition to projects of obvious and undeniable good, will be traced to the culpable neglect of this divine injunction? "House to house, and field to field" have been added by Members who, when they entered the Connexion, were scarcely worth a shilling; but have not honored God with a distinct and specific assignment, or ratio of contribution, that shall "grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength." Where there is no *previous* and great laying by *for* God, there cannot be any *subsequent* great enterprize *for* God. The whole of this section assumes two things: 1. That human instrumentality is associated with the divine prediction. 2. That the people of our communion is conceived to be the people of God; and the accredited institutions of that people, to be the cause of God. "That there be no gatherings when I come." O how many plans of obvious value have been rendered abortive, solely by the general neglect of *laying by* in store! "Go to the ant thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise."

V. *Its universal obligation*: "Let EVERY one of you, &c." No person to be exempted, unless a case can be made out wherein God has given nothing. In no case is the old adage more applicable: "Where there is a will there is a way." Instances of extreme indigence may exist; these are not denied; but even then help may be afforded them; so that the Scriptural and Wesleyan Rule should in every case be punctually observed. Some populous towns are particularly negligent on this point; by their avidity to cut off contiguous smaller towns, and thus throwing them on the Contingent Fund, the larger towns

are under special obligation to augment the Yearly Collection to a much greater amount.

The Societies, through the medium of their Circuit Stewards, should lose no time in placing the financial arrangements on a more regular and systematic basis. It is doubtful whether many public collections are productive to the general revenue; and yet the Conference cannot discretely let go their hold upon these usages, unless the Societies will unitedly guarantee to raise, by private contributions, the requisite supplies for carrying on those plans, institutions, &c. upon the terms already sanctioned by the various local vestries.

V. *As the great principles of the Wesleyan Polity are susceptible of indefinite expansion, without changing their specific character; the vestry-men throughout the Connexion ought, by example and precept, to advance the interests of the Body far more than they have hitherto been done.* "I dare not," says Mr. Wesley, "neglect doing a certain present good, for fear of some probable ill consequences in the succeeding century." On another occasion it was represented to Mr. W. that "the Trustees of Chapels might abuse their power after his death."—"It seems," replied he, "we need not take thought for tomorrow, God will provide when need shall be." Compare such a temper of mind with a petty suspicious mistrust that will scarcely allow a Preacher the means of fulfilling his ministerial duties. This morbid state of mind greatly resembles the spirit of some political economists who shamelessly abandon a christian principle, because they cannot at first see to what issue their adherence to it may lead them. This is one of the foulest stains on the religious character of Great Britain: it enters almost every question, which proposes the moral improvement of

Society. Is it not abominable that divine precepts must succumb to creaturely expediency? If a christian Teacher presses the *immediate* observance of a divine command, as intelligible as if written with a sun-beam, which may in any way disturb the present order of things; or touch the rights of man; the watch word, "Passive obedience and non-resistance," is reiterated until common sense itself is nauseated. Thousands of cases occur in the moral walk of a private individual when *prompt* obedience to the divine command is *imperative*, though he may not always see to what consequences his obedience may ultimately conduct him. No reason can be assigned why the voice of conscience and the will of God should be so indispensable to an *individual*, yet shut out of Society *collectively*. The whole procedure demonstrates an iniquitous mistrust of the Almighty, and forms the ground on which Satan plants his battering ram to demolish the lovely edifice of the Church of Christ. It is in fact saying, "We admit the justice and humanity of THY mandate; but if we *immediately* adopt them, evils will follow we fearfully deprecate: therefore, as THY commands are so capitally defective, we are desirous to avert the dire-consequences of too precipitate a fulfilment of the divine command." This reckless Infidelity is not openly avowed in so many precise terms, but the conduct is substantially the same, and God will treat it as such. This variance between public conscience and public practice forms the strong hold of Satan by which the march of humanity, piety, and liberty is seriously impeded. It is a very démon that can attire itself in the robes of a seeming prudence, humanity and discretion. Is it not almost as foul blasphemy to impute to the Almighty an inability to protect his own commands from hurtful consequences, as to ascribe his operations to the influence of an evil genius? and yet every man who creates objections, and portends disasters with sceptical luxuriance,

really does impugn divine wisdom; whether he intends or not, it is now needless to enquire.

These remarks are respectfully submitted to the serious attention of all whom they may concern. A very mistaken impression has gone abroad in relation to Church Governments. No man has any scriptural authority to withhold his contributions, or to suspend his exertions from the common cause; if he knows "a more excellent way," by all means let him walk therein; let him, after having tried in vain to restore those whom he deems to have erred, commit them into the hands of God. The sagacity, which originates in pique, and which can, with a lynx-eye, see the faults of an *old* system, has never yet promoted the interests of a *new* one; for this obvious reason, every discerning man knows that the evils, if really existent, have acquired their amplitude and sway, by successive deposits or accumulations; to which seceders had been also accessary. The religious world, in general, has but imperfect views of the accelerated ratio of extension, of which the Gospel of the Redeemer is susceptible. The sacred Scriptures speak of the Word of God and the Churches of Christ growing and **MULTIPLYING**. To **MULTIPLY**, is so to increase as that *each* unit shall contribute to the augment; otherwise there is no **MULTIPLYING**. Nature, providence, and grace, are favorable to this compound ratio of increase. 1. *Nature*: "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth;" any one subject of the animal or vegetable kingdoms, if left to its own generic power, would speedily cover the whole earth; unless arrested by counteracting causes. 2. *Providence*: the discovery of printing; the use of steam conveyance; the variety of religious institutions, could exert a combined influence on the moral wants of the world, surpassing the greatest conception of our forefathers. 3. *Grace*: the nature of the redeeming plan fully justifies the *multiplying*

ratio; in the *universality* of its application, in the *promptness* of its reception, in the *power* of its operation. The future ages of the Church of Christ must witness much larger and more rapid accessions, or the prophecies can scarcely be realized; either by the uniform ratio of increase being compound or geometrical; or by large masses of the sinning population being brought over to the Kingdom of Christ, by powerful and intense revivals.

As these sheets are specially designed to illustrate and defend the Wesleyan Polity, in its bearing on the civil liberty of its Members, there are several subjects omitted, which some readers might wish to see discussed: *e. g.* 1. Whether the piety of the Connexion be advancing, receding, or stationary. On this important subject a difference of opinion subsists: The favorable opinion of the piety of the Body, which Dr. Adam Clarke gave a few years ago, in one of his minor publications, has been eagerly seized by some, and employed in a way which the venerable Doctor never designed. As the first step of apostasy from good government in a Church is the consulting of the taste of *outward hearers* at the sacrifice of primitive simplicity and principle; so the first step of apostasy from piety is undue estimation of our own spiritual attainment and security. The Connexion, like an individual, should "rejoice with trembling." Remember the Church at Ephesus; notwithstanding "their works, and labour, and patience;" notwithstanding they could not bear them which were evil; and had tried them which said they were Apostles, and were not; and had borne, and, for Christ's sake had laboured, and had not fainted; yet having left their first love, they fell; and nothing remains but the stones of emptiness. 2. On the subject of Missions nothing has been advanced, because only one opinion can subsist: *viz.* that Methodism has blessed, and

it is adapted to bless the heathen race. 3. It may be expected that some reference should be made to the progress of other Societies, that have seceded from the old Connexion. This subject would alone fill a volume; to analyse the causes and circumstances of secession; to exhibit the moral condition of this nation before Methodism existed at all; to separate all those elements of the *new* constitutions which have been borrowed from the *old*; to trace the formation and efficiency of those vestry-habits which the first and second eras of Methodism had impressed on the people; and to investigate the thousand *personal* considerations which have been thrown into the scale; are necessary to a right adjudication of the subject. That Methodism and Methodist Preachers may have blemishes, it is not denied; *humanum est errare*, but of the doctrine, discipline, purity and efficiency of the Constitution at large, the present generation must say, "We ne'er shall look upon its like again."

THE END.

J. Hutchinson, Printer, Silver-Street, Hull.

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Rev & Dear Sir, Will you be so kind
as to say, per hearer, who will give
Tickets to my Class on Wednesday Evg,
as the hour on your Schedule should
be half past seven; not seven? I will
take care in the interim to apprise the
Preachers.

I am,
Saml Munn

Sincerely Yrs
Chelch

Rev^d J. S. Hays

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